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# Mcneil Robinson as Choral Musician A Survey of his Choral Works for the Christian and Jewish Traditions

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MCNEIL ROBINSON AS CHORAL MUSICIAN  
A SURVEY OF HIS CHORAL WORKS FOR THE CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH TRADITIONS

by

Jason Allen Wright

Bachelor of Music  
East Carolina University, 2003

Master of Music  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2004

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in

Conducting

School of Music

University of South Carolina

2017

Accepted by:

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Andrew Gowan, Committee Member

Julie Hubbert, Committee Member

Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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## DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to God, who knew me before I was born and gave me the gift of music. To my parents, Tommy A. and Ruby N. Wright, who gave me life and who continue to love and support me throughout my life and musical journey.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Neil, your choral music serves as the inspiration for this body of work. May your legacy and your compositions stand as a testament to your love, commitment, and dedication to the art of music.

To Robert McCormick and John Bradford Bohl who first introduced me to Neil's choral music while visiting St. Paul's Episcopal Church, K-Street in Washington, DC.

To Neil's former students: Kyle Babin, Christopher Creaghan, Phillip Lamb, Robert McCormick, Paul Murray, Edward Thompson, F. Anthony Thurman, and Andrew Yeargin who have provided me with a wealth of knowledge and have encouraged me along this process.

A special thank you to Christopher Creaghan who truly got me started on this project by pointing me in the right directions and was available for assistance at all times.

To the choral singers of The Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Catherine Aks, Julianna Baird, Fred Epting, Judith Malafronte, Jan Opalach, and Nancy Wertsch), Park Avenue Synagogue (Elliott Levine), Park Avenue Christian Church (Elaine Cunningham, Georga Osbourne, Myrna Payne, and Estella Pate), and Holy Trinity Catholic Church (Michelle Repella), in the City of New York for their insight on Neil as a person, church musician, and composer.

To Father David Lowry, Cantor David Lefkowitz, Cantor Azi Schwartz, John Payne, and Monsignor Leonard for their insight on Neil as a person and professional musician of the church and synagogue.

To Dr. Robert Sirota, for his insights on Neil as an academic at Manhattan School of Music.

To Wayne Leupold and the staff of The Wayne Leupold Archive in North Carolina for their generosity and help while researching his choral music in their archive.

To Neil's wife Cristina Robinson who added a personal touch to who Neil was and the inspiration behind the music.

To my conducting teachers both past and present Daniel Bara, Welborn Young, William Carroll, Larry Wyatt, Alicia Walker, and Neil Casey. Thank you for giving of yourselves to prepare a future generation of conductors.

To my mentors both past and present Cindy Joy, Mary Lou Young, Philip Young, Janette Fishell, and Karen Kennedy, who have given me a wealth of knowledge beyond what could ever be learned in a classroom.

To my dearest friend, Michael Boney, who knows me better than myself, has challenged me each day to be a better person and musician, and who has lead by example.

To my friend R. Monty Bennett, who assisted me with the Jewish compositions.

To my partner, Nicholas Ruden whose love, encouragement, and support has been immeasurable.

To my dogs Lady Adeline and Sir Windsor, who sat at my feet throughout this entire process, nudging me to finish so that we could go out and play.

## ABSTRACT

McNeil Robinson II (1943-2015), internationally renowned organist and composer, was born in Birmingham, Alabama and educated at Birmingham Southern College, Mannes College of Music, and the Juilliard School. Robinson served at several iconic and celebrated churches and at a synagogue in the City of New York including: the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, the Church of the Holy Family (United Nations), Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Avenue Synagogue, and Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church. As an academic, Robinson was chair of the organ department and a professor of music at Manhattan School of Music. Over the course of these appointments, Robinson composed music for organ solo, organ and orchestra, choral, and solo voice with organ and orchestra accompaniment. Other compositions include music for a film, a play, and an unfinished opera. Robinson composed sixty choral compositions along with a wealth of service music for both the Christian and Jewish traditions. These compositions include anthems, Missa brevis, hymns, and psalm responsorials. Although, much of the choral music was written for use in his own parish and synagogue, other works were commissions received from other houses of worship across the United States and abroad, including a commission by the Archbishop of Canterbury in England, and for the concert stage. Robinson's compositional teachers and influences include: Vincent Persichetti, Yehudi Wyner, and Virgil Thomson, with influences of Igor Stravinsky, Olivier Messiaen, and Maurice Duruflé. Robinson's choral compositions can be categorized as post-Neoclassical, serial, and conservative with elements of contemplative and Romantic

style-characteristics. This document aims to provide a comprehensive look at composer McNeil Robinson, with an emphasis on his choral composition. Chapter One will provide a biographical sketch of Robinson's life and career. Chapter Two contains conversations with family, academics, former students, clergy, singers, and other professionals in the field. Chapter Three introduces Robinson as a choral musician. Chapter Four outlines Robinson's compositional style. Chapter Five is a survey of Robinson's choral music for the Christian tradition. Chapter Six discusses Robinson and Park Avenue Synagogue. Chapter Seven is a survey of Robinson's choral music for the Jewish Tradition. Chapter Eight serves as a conclusion. The appendixes will outline a list of supplemental materials, which includes: a catalogue of works, bulletin from Robinson's memorial service (containing his musical compositions), a video of his memorial service, a video interview of Robinson with the NYC American Guild of Organists, an audio recording of Robinson speaking about Jewish music and his tenure at Park Avenue Synagogue, and a video of the author's lecture-recital. The appendix continues with the Leupold Archive inventory list, Robinson's obituary, submitted themes for improvisation, list of commissions and premieres at Park Avenue Synagogue, and DMA recital programs and brief biographical sketch of the author.

## PREFACE

I was first introduced to the choral music of McNeil Robinson in 2009. It was in early November, I was visiting my friend John Bradford Bohl, who served as the Assistant Director of Music and Organist at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. Their choir, under the direction of Robert McCormick, was preparing to record their upcoming compact disc *We Sing of God* (2010), which featured Robinson's *Missa Brevis* (1996). I admired his style so much that when I got back home to North Carolina, I contacted Lois Fyfe Music in Nashville, Tennessee and ordered his published works. When the pieces arrived, I played through them at the piano. His soaring melodic structures, harmonic language, and manner of text setting gave me the same experience that I had first encounter when hearing his *Missa Brevis*.

It was in the fall of 2015 that I began to ponder what I might use as the subject of my document, many ideas surfaced; however, I kept returning to the choral pieces of McNeil Robinson that I owned. I contacted Robert McCormick to run my idea by him; he was immediately thrilled that someone was taking up this project. Robert gave me some preliminary contacts and resources to start my research, including Christopher Creaghan's contact information who I will mention later. It was only when I read F. Anthony Thurman's doctoral dissertation from Manhattan School of Music that I learned of McNeil's complete *oeuvre* from the list of compositions in the appendix. From that list I learned that many of Robinson's choral composition are no longer in publication, some have never been published, and a few are lost.

Thankfully Robinson entrusted his compositions to Christopher Creaghan, who he often referred to as “my scribe.” Following Robinson’s death, Creaghan categorized his choral music and prepared it to be sent to the Wayne Leupold Archives in Colfax, North Carolina where it is now available for perusal and research.

At the publication of this document, plans are in process to in the near future record a commercial compact disc of Robinson’s choral music.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGO .....	American Guild of Organist
CMS .....	Choral Manuscript
CPub.....	Choral Published
NYC .....	New York City
PACC .....	Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), New York City, NY
PAS .....	Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, NY
SMV .....	St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY

## CHAPTER 1

### BIOGRAPHY



Figure 1.1 McNeil Robinson Photograph

McNeil Robinson II was born in Birmingham, Alabama on March 16, 1943. The deep southern state of Alabama was far removed from Manhattan, with one of the world's international commercial, financial, and cultural centers, that Robinson would later call home for the remainder of his life.

Little is known about Robinson's early life and musical training. Christopher Creaghan, a former student and friend of over twenty-five years, acknowledges that much of Robinson's early career is shrouded in mystery, and intentionally. Robinson himself actually discouraged inquiries into his personal life. "He didn't discuss his personal life and history, and didn't appreciate inquiries into it. He had to be taken on his own terms. There were parts to him that were off limits and you were never going to know what they were."<sup>1</sup> What is known about his early years is documented in the dissertation of Anthony Thurman and later expanded in the work of Andrew Yeargin, both former students of Robinson.

Robinson's parents were artistically gifted. His mother was a pianist and his father was a painter, who also owned and operated an engineering firm. As a child, Robinson sang as a treble in the church, the denomination of which is unknown. As a young boy he shared his mother's emphatic interest in and love for the piano. His mother, however, actively discouraged his interests, perhaps because she was diagnosed with scleroderma, a chronic connective tissue disease that caused hardening of the hand. His father also felt there was no future in the arts for the young Robinson. His father's attitude toward the arts as a career choice impacted Robinson throughout his life, most notably seen through his personality.

Robinson made his way to the piano and at age fourteen he became a student at the Birmingham Conservatory as a piano pupil of Hugh Thomas. The Birmingham Conservatory was opened in 1895. In 1940, the conservatory was moved onto the campus of Birmingham-Southern College, which Robinson later attended. The

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<sup>1</sup> Creaghan, Christopher. Interview by author, 23 November 2016, Columbia, SC

conservatory is still in existence today, providing music education to students of all ages. By age seventeen, Robinson had become a master of the instrument and was afforded the opportunity to perform with the Birmingham Symphony, known since 1979 as the Alabama Symphony.

Robinson received a full scholarship to study piano at Birmingham-Southern College. In 1962, at the age of nineteen, he moved to New York City to attend Mannes College of Music, where he was a student of Leonard Shure. He studied piano privately with Rosina Lhevine, and Beveridge Webster. Robinson, however, did not receive a degree from Mannes. In 1965 he was admitted to the Juilliard School where he studied organ with Vernon de Tar and composition with Vincent Persichetti. He graduated from Juilliard in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in music.

Throughout his life Robinson valued education and felt it necessary to continue educating himself. In an interview with F. Anthony Thurman in July 1997, Robinson said, "The day I stop learning will be the day that I die."<sup>2</sup> Robinson later studied organ with George Faxon. Perhaps one of the most influential figures in Robinson's life was Marcel Dupré, a French organist who was organist at the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris and organ professor at the Paris Conservatory. Dupré had an international reputation for his skill as an improviser. Dupré, like Robinson, possessed a natural instinct for improvisation, a rarity among American organists but common among European organists. It was through his studies with Dupré that Robinson developed his own style of improvisation. Robinson was known for his ability to improvise in a wide array of styles from the Baroque to twenty-first century.

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<sup>2</sup> Thurman, F. Anthony. "McNeil Robinson: His Life and Music (1962-1998)." DMA diss., The Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY, 1999, 3.

He continued his organ studies many years later as a private, non-degree student of Russell Saunders, who was organ professor at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He studied also with Catharine Crozier, who with her husband Harold Gleason, wrote one of the premier organ methods used in the United States. With a desire to know Spanish baroque styles, Robinson attended a summer symposium at University of Salamanca (Spain) where he studied organ with Guy Bovet and Monserrat Torrent.

F. Anthony Thurman summarizes the influence of education on Robinson's life, "Inspired by the masters of previous generations, McNeil Robinson has become a master of the present day: as a performer, as a composer, as an improviser, and as a teacher - a complete organist."<sup>3</sup> In 2016, Andrew Yeargin published a dissertation on Robinson that hailed Robinson as "The Complete Musician."<sup>4</sup>

Robinson's education afforded him a multifaceted career as organist, academic, improviser, and composer. Robinson taught at some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the northeastern United States including Yale University, Queens College in the City of New York, and Mannes College. In 1984 Robinson began a thirty-one-year tenure as professor of organ at Manhattan School of Music. In 1991, he became the chair of the organ department at Manhattan, a position he held until his death in 2015. Robinson's commitment to musical excellence and the field of church music has influenced a new generation of students. Many of his students hold noted positions in churches and synagogues across the United States including Christopher Creaghan, The Riverside Church in New York City; Jennifer Pascaul, St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York

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<sup>3</sup> Thurman, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Yeargin, Andrew. "McNeil Robinson: The Complete Musician." DMA diss., The Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY, 2016, 20.

City; Jason Roberts, St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City, and Robert McCormick, St. Mark's Locus Street in Philadelphia.

As Robinson's reputation as an improviser began to grow, many well-respected composers such as Dominick Argento, Lukas Foss, Ned Rorem, Charles Wuorinen and Vladmimir Ussachevsky, submitted themes on which he would improvise. (Please see Appendix C for these themes). Improvisation continued to play a key role in Robinson's church appointments, both in the Christian and Jewish traditions for the remainder of his life. Improvisation is known among organists as the vehicle that provides cohesiveness in the liturgical service.

Having been raised in the church, Robinson considered himself a deeply spiritual person. Little is known about his denomination affiliation. F. Anthony Thurman's dissertation makes no mention of this. Andrew Yeargin's most recent dissertation makes note that Robinson was raised in a strict Anglo-Catholic tradition.<sup>5</sup> In an interview with his wife Cristina Robinson, she asserts he was raised in the United Methodist Church and then joined the Episcopal church once he arrived in NYC.<sup>6</sup> As a Christian, he was inspired by the impact that the Jewish tradition had on the Christian musical tradition. As a result, Robinson became a well-known and respected musician in both the Christian and Jewish traditions.

Robinson served many celebrated houses of worship in New York City. In 1964 he became the assistant director of music at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin (Episcopal), the organist in 1967, and director of music from 1974 to 1982. During his tenure at St. Mary's, he held two other church jobs simultaneously. From 1967 to 1978 he

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<sup>5</sup> Yeargin, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, Cristina. Interview by author, 31 October 2016, Columbia, SC.



was director of music and organist at the Church of the Holy Family of the United Nations (Catholic) and from 1970 to 1976 director of music at Trinity Institute at Trinity Church Wall Street (Episcopal). In his dissertation, Yeargin likens Robinson's multiple jobs to that of Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig, where Bach was responsible for the church music programs of four prominent churches in the city, St. Thomas School and the music at St. Nicolas, St. Thomas, St. Matthew (the "New"), and St. Peters.<sup>7</sup> The difference, being that Robinson served multiple denominations, while Bach served only Lutheran parishes. In 1984 Robinson accepted the position of director of music and organist at Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a position he held until 2007. In 2007 he was asked to serve as director of music at Holy Trinity Catholic Church. In 1966, Robinson began his longest tenure at Park Avenue Synagogue, an iconic conservative Jewish synagogue. It is important to note that Robinson held this position while serving other Christian churches in the City. Park Avenue Synagogue was a vibrant conservative synagogue that valued quality music. It was Leonard Bernstein who helped secure the job for Robinson.<sup>8</sup>

It is not uncommon for musicians to move from post to post. Historically, musicians moved for more compensation or for better opportunities for performing music. For Robinson, it was not for money or music opportunities that he changed posts, it was his temperament that got him into trouble with clergy. His wife Cristian stated, "They [clergy] weren't able to see past his personality to what he offered them musically."<sup>9</sup> In my interview with his wife, she felt that some of the biggest

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<sup>7</sup> Yeargin, 19.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, McNeil. "Interview with Louis Weingarden." Mark Slobin Cantorate Project. Wesleyan University. November 1985. Accessed October 1, 2016. <http://wescholar.wesleyan.edu/interviews/92/>.

<sup>9</sup> Robinson, Cristina. Interview by author, 31 October 2016, Columbia, SC.

disappointments of his career occurred when he had to leave a church. She goes on to say that the clergy at Holy Trinity and at Park Avenue Synagogue understood him and greatly valued his music – that is why he stayed.<sup>10</sup>

Over the course of these appointments, Robinson composed music for organ solo, organ and orchestra, choral, and solo voice with organ and orchestra accompaniment. Other compositions include music for the film, *Watch 9 Variations* (1966), an avant-garde dance film by Hilary Harris. The thirteen-minute film was the winner of the Cork Film Festival and the San Francisco Shorthills Film Festival. In 1973, he composed music for a play by Anne Sexton that was premiered at the American Place Theater; the manuscript has been lost from Robinson's personal archives. In 1979 Robinson wrote a one movement opera entitled *Scene from Medea: An Opera In Progress*. The work was commissioned by Janet Sullivan and premiered in Alice Trully Hall, Lincoln Center in 1979. Robinson composed sixty choral compositions along with a wealth of service music for both the Christian and Jewish traditions. These compositions include anthems, Missae breves, hymns, psalm responsorials, and service music. Although much of the choral music was written for use in his own parish and synagogue, other works were commissions received from other houses of worship across the United States and abroad, including a commission by the Archbishop of Canterbury in England (*Ecce Sacerdos*/1967). Other noted commissions include the American Guild of Organists (*Missa Brevis*/1996), the Group for Contemporary Music (*Three Spanish Songs*), and Musica Sacra (*Messe Solennelle*/1987). Please see the supplementary files for Robinson's complete catalogue, which gives the commission information for each piece.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Robinson passed on May 9, 2015 in New York City following a long illness. He will be remembered as a distinguished concert organist, improviser, academic, composer, and church musician who had a profound influence on many American musicians in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONVERSATIONS ON MCNEIL ROBINSON



Figure 2.1 McNeil Robinson Photograph

I did not have the pleasure of knowing McNeil Robinson personally; he passed away before I began work on this document. The knowledge that I have gained of Robinson as both a person and musician have come from conversations with his wife, former colleagues, undergraduate and graduate students at Manhattan School of Music who studied with him, the ministers and cantors with whom he was a partner in ministry, the singers in his choirs at churches and the synagogue in New York City, and members of the greater music community. To summarize these conversations surrounding Robinson would be a disservice to Robinson. Rather, I have elected to include them as they were written by each interviewee. It is my hope that these conversations will give a better insight into Robinson and his music.

## **Interviewees**

### **Family**

Cristina Robinson

### **Academics**

Robert Sirota

### **Former Students**

Edward Thompson  
Christopher Creaghan  
Robert McCormick  
Kyle Babin  
Andrew Yeargin  
Phillip R. Lamb

### **Clergy**

David Lowry  
David Lefkowitz  
John Payne  
Thomas P. Leonard

### **Singers**

Catherine Aks  
Elliott Z. Levine  
Julianne Baird  
Judith Malafronte  
Jan Opalach  
Nancy Wersch  
Elaine Cunningham  
Myrna Payne  
Estella Pate  
Georga Osborne

### **Music Professionals**

Philip Brunelle  
Wayne Leupold

**CRISTINA ROBINSON**

Wife of McNeil Robinson

Interviewed: October 31, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

CR: I met him when I was 18, 1976.

**JAW: In what capacity did you first meet him?**

CR: He was the director at St. Mary the Virgin. My mother wanted me to take piano lessons. I had been trained as a ballerina, but due to an injury, I could no longer continue. The first time I met him was in the kitchen of St. Mary the Virgin. When I first shook hands with him I knew I was going to marry him. It felt like a revelation.

**JAW: How many years later before you got married?**

CR: We got married many years later in January of 1992. We had been dating, we were both seeing other people, we never were single at the same time. Finally we decided after a long time, to get married – I was 33. We were going to get married at Park Avenue Christian and two weeks before they put up scaffolding in the church and we had to move it to Church of the Heavenly Rest. I remember us calling 250 people, telling them the location was being moved.

**JAW: Did McNeil compose the music for your wedding?**

CR: He composed the march that we came down on. It had been written for the synagogue and I had always loved that piece, so we chose that. Chorally, no, we used Duruflé *Ubi Caritas* and some others. It was very simple and beautiful.

**JAW: Did you sing for him?**

CR: I was the soloist at Park Avenue Christian Church for many years. Piano wasn't my thing, so I started taking singing lessons. I discovered I was a coloratura soprano. Neil got me with Cathy Aks, I started studying with her and continued to study. I sang until 2000, when an illness prevented me from singing; it took me several years, 6 -7, to recover. I haven't sung professionally since.

**JAW: What was he like in rehearsal?**

CR: He was a perfectionist; it had to be perfect. He had a temper, which upset me. He wanted it perfect and if it wasn't, we would do again until it was right. He also loved to play pranks; loved to wear masks and scare people. There were other times he upset some people in the choir. We had volunteers in the choir, but he had difficulty working with volunteers. He had the greatest choirs in NYC! What he did with the orchestra, the singers, etc... Everyone loved him because they knew he was insane in a good way. You

would love him and hate him. But he loved his music so much that he wanted it to be as perfect as it could be. He succeeded!

**JAW: How different was it for him to be at Park Avenue Christian versus St. Mary the Virgin?**

CR: He managed to have them sing it. People at first were taken back, they had never heard music of this degree. It later enriched their lives and elevated the experience. People came for the music. He brought beautiful music to the church. As always, there were people who didn't like it. I think he changed it for the better. Unfortunately, a new pastor came and that was the end of that.

**JAW: Tell me about Neil and his students.**

CR: He loved his students more than anything. He loved to prank them, wearing masks and all.

**JAW: Talk to me about Neil and his worldliness.**

CR: He loved to cook. I think he would have done better living in Europe; he had this European flare about him. He could get in the car with a driver and be able to identify where they were from and talk about restaurants and all that were in those cities.

**JAW: Talk to me about Neil's upbringing in the church.**

CR: I think he grew up in the Methodist Church, but I am not really sure. He was from Alabama, the south was very fundamental. I think he later became Episcopalian.

**JAW: Where did Neil get his inspiration?**

CR: He loved scripture. When he wrote a piece for someone, he embodied that person. Even the pieces for our animals, they were emotional. I think it all stemmed from his heart.

**JAW: What would you say was his greatest accomplishment?**

CR: His students. He was proud of them. And secondly, his compositions. What he taught his students and the perfection he tried to bring to them in performance – that is what he would have said. Neil was always humble about his composition; it was like he was unaware how good he was. The pride came when his students played beautifully. You could see him like father, very proud of them. His improvisations were like no other.

**JAW: Is there one thing that stands out as his biggest disappointment in his career?**

CR: I think it was when he was in a parish and had built up this great program the struggle came with the pastor or the powers that be and with church politics. Leaving churches in not the best of circumstances hurt Neil, it really got to him. He always felt he was treated poorly, not appreciating him for what he was. At Holy Trinity, he said after all these years, I found a place that I am loved. Granted you had to deal with him, you had to overlook that and focus on the beauty of the music.

**JAW: Talk to me about Neil and his long career at Park Avenue Synagogue.**

CR: I just spoke to David, former Cantor at Park Avenue Synagogue. He and Neil created something remarkable and special there. He was well loved and respected there. They adored Neil! It was like coming home when he was there. He was able to compose and touch so many people there.

**JAW: How was he at home?**

CR: He was the most loving man I ever met. He could be a little boy; he could throw tantrums and it was hard to deal with. But his greatest love was his music and me. I was blessed, but he had struggles with his father, casting a shadow he could never shake off. Some of that was taken into his music. He loved his music and his teaching – he wanted to do and be the best he could. I think he accomplished that. He was an incredible man. He loved his animals too. When he loved, he loved intensely. There wasn't anyone who met him that will forget him. I miss him terribly, but I know it's heaven's gain and our loss, and he will always live in my heart forever. He lived, he definitely lived!



**ROBERT SIROTA**

Former President, Manhattan School of Music, New York City, NY

Interviewed: November 8, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

RS: 1990, at the National Convention of the AGO in Boston

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

RS: I knew him first as an organist and organ composer. We had an admiration for each other's music and would always discuss what we were composing when from time to time we encountered each other. From 2005 to 2012 I was President of Manhattan School of Music and he was a member of my faculty.

**JAW: McNeil had a varied career as a musician. In what order would you rank his multifaceted career: academic, church musician, composer, organist? (Ex. I would rank McNeil as church musician, organist, composer, and then academic.)**

RS: composer, organist, church musician, academic

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a faculty member at Manhattan?**

RS: Brilliantly knowledgeable, very devoted to his students, sometimes contentious and volatile.

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

RS: He was extremely demanding of himself, holding himself to the highest standards, and was equally demanding of others.

**JAW: Is there anything that sticks out most about his musicianship, his teaching or performance abilities?**

RS: He was a consummate musician, a brilliant performer, and arguably the greatest organ improviser of his generation.

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's commitment to his students?**

RS: He was deeply committed to his students, taking a personal interest in all aspects of their lives.

**JAW: In what way did McNeil elevate the organ program to its present prestige?**

RS: His successful work at MSM was also marred by his volatility. He attracted very talented and dedicated students. However, he also got into disputes with some other faculty, and with some students who he did not necessarily trust or respect.

**JAW: What were the challenges of working with this type of personality?**

RS: I saw my responsibility as President of MSM as both supporting McNeil as the rare and unique talent he was while also protecting him, the institution and the students from the excesses of his temperamental outbursts.

**JAW: What was rewarding about working with someone of this personality?**

RS: The creative and musical results of his best work as teacher, performer and composer were incomparable.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

RS: On a number of occasions, I had to “talk him down” from pursuing rash and potentially litigious responses to real or perceived slights and injustices. I urged him to focus his energy on composing and teaching rather than trying to seek redress for issues he would obsess about.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

RS: He was extravagantly supportive of his friends and colleagues, and students. He was very generous of his praise and respect for me as a composer, and since I had such great respect for his opinion, this meant a lot to me.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

RS: I did not perceive him in this way.

**JAW: How should McNeil be remembered most?**

RS: He should be remembered as a profoundly gifted composer, a prodigious organist, particularly as an improviser, and a skillful and devoted teacher.

**EDWARD THOMPSON**

Former Student, Manhattan School of Music  
Minister of Music, The Unitarian Church in Westport, Westport, CT  
Interviewed: October 28, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

ET: 1976

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

ET: I first knew McNeil as an organ student and later as a composition student. If he were away on a concert tour, I would sometimes substitute-teach for him. I also accompanied some of the choral concerts that he did at Park Avenue Christian Church.

**JAW: McNeil had a varied career as a musician. In what order would you rank his multifaceted career: academic, church musician, composer, organist? (Ex. I would rank McNeil as church musician, organist, composer, and then academic.)**

ET: I would rank McNeil as a musician, organist, composer, and academic.

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

ET: His commitment to musical excellence was evident in his pedigree, in his thirst for knowledge, in his extraordinarily developed ear. There is no question but that he stood for the best.

**JAW: What sticks out most about his musicianship?**

ET: First, McNeil possessed supreme musical gifts in terms of his improvisational skills, the likes of which few people in the world possess. The second aspect of his art that is salient is his imaginative approach in the area of composition. The third element would be the passion with which he approached both performance and teaching.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a teacher and mentor?**

ET: One had to work very hard to garner praise from McNeil and when his standards were met he would be generous in his praise. One of the things that I always appreciated about his teaching is that he would share so much about teachers from the previous generation. He seemed to have endless stories about great artists, most of which resulted from personal experience. Thus I was able to get a variety of approaches to the repertoire I was studying. And the same is true for the world of composition. He studied with some of the best and he was willing to share his knowledge.

**JAW: What is the most important thing you gained from your experience with him?**

ET: That is impossible to say because there are too many things to mention. When one has an encounter with the Spirit (through music) it cannot be easily verbalized, and he fostered those kinds of encounters.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

ET: I have observed that the McNeil I knew in 1976 was not the same McNeil I knew in the latter years. Things change. It is true that in the latter years there was a proclivity toward those traits you mentioned. And yet, at the 'end of the day', one could not deny the master that he had become.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

ET: I have personally experienced all of those qualities in him. He provided much support to me over the years and I remain grateful for it.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

ET: The personality of McNeil was extraordinarily complex. It would take volumes to describe the multiple aspects of his character and still miss the mark. At any given moment he could switch from one aspect to another, and this is what added to the mystery. Any given moment one aspect could contradict another still be under the umbrella of one personality. As an artist, he knew intuitively that nothing in life can be completely explained and that is why he was a musician. For him, music was about as close as we can come to expressing those inner levels, or in a spiritual sense, experiencing Divinity.

**JAW: How do you want McNeil to be remembered?**

ET: As a creative genius who dedicated his life to his art.

**JAW: What is your knowledge of his choral music?**

ET: I have performed many of his pieces, both at St. Mary the Virgin and at Park Avenue Christian Church.

**JAW: In your opinion, what makes McNeil's music different than other 20th century composers of the same time?**

ET: There were two areas of knowledge that he worked hard to obtain: 1) musical theory, and 2) familiarity with the great masterworks. Besides standard musical theory, he was conversant with Hindemith's pedagogical system of composition; the twelve-tone approach of Schoenberg; and the octatonic approach of Messiaen. His genius lay in how he formulated his own 'voice' from and with these approaches.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer?**

ET: The early mass (influenced by Copland); the Christmas trilogy (at St. Mary the Virgin); "Dum Medium"; the song cycle for soprano; the various motets; the wonderful Psalm settings which have been so effective.

**JAW: Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

ET: "Dum Medium" is a piece which contains both some octatonic writing and some more conventional harmonies. Both are judiciously used to express and differentiate lines of the text in interesting ways.

**JAW: Having programmed and performed his repertoire more than anyone else, in your opinion, with regard to his choral music, what are the greatest challenges for the choir, the soloists, the conductor, and the organist?**

ET: The significant challenge would be to mark the score in a way that allows for a maximum expression of the words. Part of the issue, especially in the early unpublished works, is that he would produce a score with great speed and various items like tempi and dynamics were not always indicated. When the works were originally premiered it was not a problem because he would be the conductor and offer his singers verbal directions. For those who are now performing those works one needs to edit judiciously. In the latter works which were published this is not an issue. The largest challenge, in performance in general, would be to keep the compositions filled with excitement, verve, passion and musicality. In other words, make the music come alive.

**CHRISTOPHER CREAGHAN**

Former Student, Manhattan School of Music  
Assistant Organist, The Riverside Church, New York City, NY  
Interviewed: November 23, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

CLC: February 1988.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

CLC: I studied with him for six years at the Manhattan School of Music for my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Organ Performance. Neil was a close friend & mentor for over 25 years.

**JAW: McNeil had a varied career as a musician. In what order would you rank his multifaceted career: academic, church musician, composer, organist? (Ex. I would rank McNeil as church musician, organist, composer, and then academic.)**

CLC: It seems a little odd to me ranking his various attributes as they are all part of a whole, a bit like asking which side of a cube is more important. Most people excel in some or only one of those various attributes. He excelled in them all as various parts of his complete and consummate musicianship. His roots were as a keyboard and organ virtuoso. He applied his formidable talent to being the most complete, capable, well informed church musician possible as director, composer, improviser, and intellectual.

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

CLC: Neil possessed a voracious curiosity, keen intellect, and a remarkable memory, which he put to perpetual use searching and expanding his knowledge. He was never settled, always pressing on to improve upon what he already knew. Right up until the end - and even after he passed - packages were arriving at his doorstep of the latest editions of music and books containing the most recent scholarship.

**JAW: What sticks out most about his musicianship?**

CLC: His uncanny perception - clear, penetrating right to the heart of the matter. He seemed to have a direct line to the muse, a clear understanding of the essence of music. His music making was always true to the style and notated intentions of the composer, yet he was never a slave to the score. His playing was greatly compelling, full of life and rhythmic vigor.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a teacher and mentor?**

CLC: He loved to teach. He loved to examine and re-examine music and seemed to be invigorated by the process of exploring music with his students, and in so doing discovering new solutions to old problems. He knew exactly how he did what he did, and knew how to explain it so you could do it too. Those who did not know him would suppose he was intimidating. The opposite was true. He was very enabling and entirely focused on you and on the music and what would bring it to life. There was no bound to what he would do to get an excellent result in anything he turned his attention to, and that included his student's development and success. A lesson with him was always intense and inspiring. You could bring the same repertoire to him week after week for months and still be excited about it. He invariably found another weakness or unexplored layer to improve upon. His standard of excellence for himself extended to his teaching and to his expectation for your own work. He became very involved in your own success. He willingly gave of his time beyond what was expected of him. There was no limit on what he would do to help you, as long as you did your part. You had to be there with the same work attitude right along with him and arrive at a lesson prepared, or you would be sorry!

**JAW: What is the most important thing you gained from your experience with him?**

CLC: He once said "you need to do what it takes to supersede the limitations of the instrument", referring to the organ being a particularly difficult machine to turn into a musical one. He instilled in his students a sense of excellence and confidence achieved through rigorous preparation with a seemingly infinite variety of practice techniques both musical and technical. He had ways of perceiving the printed score to supersede it and get to the essence of the music. He taught how to examine music from very many angles and determine ways to analyze and solve technical problems. He believed that confidence in performance comes from careful and rigorous preparation, and that there are no short cuts to hard work.

**JAW: Upon McNeil's death, you and another student were given all of McNeil's compositions. What is it like to have in your possession all of his choral music, both published and unpublished?**

CLC: There is a great sense of responsibility. He charged Jason Roberts and myself with caring for his library. There is nothing more sensitive than caring for an artist's work after they are gone. I am pleased that it can remain fully intact in one location at the Wayne Leupold Archive.

**JAW: What have been the challenges and the rewards for ordering and categorizing his choral music in preparation to be sent to the Wayne Leupold Archive in North Carolina?**

CLC: The music was not in order but rather a random stack and collection of papers. Neil did not keep a careful library of his own works. There are pieces missing from it which will hopefully surface in time. It was an 18 month on-and-off process sorting his papers and manuscripts into categories that defined themselves over time, and bringing loose pages together into complete scores. As it turns out his predominant output is choral and vocal music for the church and synagogue. Only a handful of works are for solo organ and various other concert works, which is interesting. Since his reputation was built on his organ performance and improvisational ability, one would expect that there would be more works for solo organ. His output reveals him to be a deeply engaged church and synagogue musician who composed music predominantly for his own use. The larger works and non-choral works tend to be the commissioned pieces. I was familiar with his compositions of the last 30 years. My discovery here was how much more he had composed earlier but which lay dormant for most of that time. The older compositions are a window into his time at St. Mary the Virgin, before I knew him. His compositional hand changed at some point. The earlier works are written in a “free” hand, whereas the later works composed at a drafting table with exacting lines and beams drawn with a ruler, attributes which in some cases helps to date them.

**JAW: In your opinion, what makes McNeil’s music different than other 20th century composers of the same time?**

CLC: His choral compositions in particular are predominantly tonal at a time when the prevailing style was defined by atonality, experimentation, and extreme dissonance. He was writing choral music for a first class professional church choir for use in worship services and doesn’t appear to have been interested in appealing to the expectations of academia. His sensibility was grounded in the French Romantic language of the 19th and 20th Century. At the same time he fully understood and was capable of writing in any modern style, and studied carefully Allen Forte’s set theory. He was most harmonically adventurous and avant-garde in his improvisations. Neil understood serial techniques thoroughly and was more apt to apply them in his organ works. To me his music sounds modern in the style of Poulenc, with familiar harmonies used in unexpected and imaginative ways. He once said “the basis of everything I have done is counterpoint”. Studying improvisation with him always included rigorous exercises in species counterpoint and Fux’s *Gradus ad Parnassum* and its influence is clearly evident in his compositions. He used his ear, and his music always has excellent voice leading. He was very much about structure and order in composition.

**JAW: Andrew Yeargin’s dissertation categories his music into three phases. Do you agree with these classifications or would you categorize them differently?**

**Phase I – Post-Neoclassic, influenced by Stravinsky.**

**Phase II – Serialism.**

**Phase III – Conservative/Hyper-Romantic.**

CLC: The categories do describe the different styles Neil composed in. The “Phases” more accurately delineate his periods of study and interest, describing the attributes and characteristics in his music, but he could switch styles as he felt the need. It would



not be accurate to put all his compositions on a time line and expect them to neatly fit into three categories.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer?**

CLC: The most substantial choral work is the Messe Solonnelle, a work that developed over time, eventually culminating in a full orchestration and premiere at Lincoln Center. Had I But Pinions is one of his most beloved anthems, likely to draw tears from those who sang it with him, as it somehow captures his most tender side. Missa in die Tribulationis is a particularly difficult work to sing well. The later works he chose to be published by Edition-Peters were important to him. Dum Medium was composed shortly after studying Allen Forte's set theory. I must admit that my familiarity with his entire output is limited, thus I look forward to the fruits of your dissertation.

**JAW: Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

CLC: See above.

**JAW: Having programmed and performed his repertoire, in your opinion, with regard to his choral music, what are the greatest challenges for the choir, the soloists, the conductor, and the organist?**

CLC: On many occasions I accompanied his music while he conducted. Neil loved big voices, and especially loved daring stratospheric soprano solos. Finding the right tempo is important. His music has some of the same dangers as French Romantic music, and can be mistakenly performed too slowly and sentimentally with over-reliance on rubato, which is contrary to how he would perform it. There is always a strong sense of the tactus; a strongly felt metronomic underpinning in the large beats, yet a subtle flexibility between the beats; and always, always, forward motion, with a clear sense of phrase direction. He was very expressive with dynamics. The organ parts can at times seem like finger twisters, but they are usually quite playable with some analysis. If something seems impossible it's usually solved by redistributing the notes. He often had ways of dividing inner voices between the hands, or taking parts down in the pedal not notated as such in the score, which makes them much more playable. He played everything he wrote, but didn't always write the tricks into the score for how to play them.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

CLC: There are so many ways to answer this question. James Thomashower, Executive Director of the AGO, wrote an excellent description of his personality:

McNeil Robinson will be remembered for his larger than life personality, his broad sense of humor, and his flair for the dramatic. Highly opinionated often to the delight of his devoted students, his speech was colorful and sometimes caustic. Neil smoked like a chimney and could both charm people or offend them with equal ease. He greatly enjoyed holding court and could do so in the back of a recital hall or in the front of a restaurant. He had a very generous spirit and supported the art of improvisation by underwriting the first-place prize of the AGO's National Competition in Organ Improvisation for many years. In addition to being a masterful musician, skilled improvisateur, teacher, and composer, he was a man who lived his life with gusto and didn't suffer fools or incompetence lightly. Invariably there were some people who preferred to steer clear of him, but there were always countless others who were drawn inexorably into his circle. Although he was physically slight in stature, there was a grandiosity about his approach to the world. He said and did outrageous things and got away with them because of his charismatic personality and the twinkle in his blue eyes. Neil was very reactive and drama seeking. He had a large personality and would say anything to anybody, often speaking without thinking, sometimes with unfortunate consequences. His keen awareness and perspective penetrated into everything he experienced, be it analyzing the music of Messiaen, exploring the flavors of a tasty dish, or people watching while strolling down a Manhattan sidewalk. It made him endlessly fascinating to be around. He did not suffer fools lightly, had little patience for those who lacked the work ethic he brought to everything, and had little tolerance to "pretenders", those who expected the recognition of their profession while not meeting the standard. "Quality" was a word he used often, be it for hymnody, teaching, an edition of music, performance, art, food, or clothes. He did not shy from berating an errant waiter. If he took you in to his sphere of influence you felt you had a connection to a genius and a phenomenally gifted musician who elevated you to his level. He could be embarrassing and unreasonable though not usually unprovoked; it was part of the whole package of who he was.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

CLC: He was concerned with and supportive of your success in all your endeavors, musical or otherwise. He always had some useful piece of advice for any problem you would bring to him, be it life issues, medical problems (he knew all the best doctors!), or professional development. Your concerns became his concerns, and he would check up on you to see how you were getting on. He never failed to follow up an invitation to a dinner or engagement with a thank you phone call the next day. He was deeply engaged socially and seemed to know everything that was going on in the profession. There was no halfway with Neil. Everything was pursued to it's fullest.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

CLC: He didn't discuss his personal life and history, and didn't appreciate inquires into it. You had to take him on his own terms. There were parts to him that were off

limits and you were never going to know what they were. I believe I knew him as well as anyone could, as much as he would ever allow. Even having had a close connection with him uninterrupted for over 25 years there were parts of him that remained completely private. He did not allow you to know his whole person at all.

**JAW: How do you want McNeil to be remembered?**

CLC: A great musician and true friend, an inspiration, and an unparalleled talent.

**ROBERT MCCORMICK**

Former Private Student, Manhattan School of Music

Former Director of Music, St. Paul's Parish, K-Street, Washington, DC

Director of Music, St. Mark's Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA

Interviewed: November 14, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

RM: 2003

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

RM: As his eventual successor at St. Mary the Virgin, and then as his student (roughly 2003-2007).

**JAW: McNeil had a varied career as a musician. In what order would you rank his multifaceted career: academic, church musician, composer, organist? (Ex. I would rank McNeil as church musician, organist, composer, and then academic.)**

RM: Composer, organist, church musician, academic. Don't forget his long tenure as a synagogue musician!

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

RM: It informed every aspect of his musical life. He respected great musicianship above nearly everything else. Rightly or wrongly, in his mind, it was a mark of great character to be a great musician. He had no patience whatsoever for a professional musician who was mediocre. (I suppose he would have said such a person ought to have found another career.)

**JAW: What sticks out most about his musicianship?**

RM: His multifaceted genius and the ease with which he communicated musicality.

**JAW: McNeil's is said to have a few mentors and models; who do you think are the greatest and why?**

RM: There were so many and details of McNeil's life and career that were always shrouded in mystery. It was hard to determine when and for how long he studied or interacted with each. Two of the greats who were hugely influential on him were Marcel Dupré and Leonard Bernstein. I am not sure of the extent of his actual relationship or interaction with either. He spoke often of Virgil Thomson and said he studied with him. The same was true of Charles Wuorinen. As for organ teachers, it seemed to me that Clarence Watters was his most influential teacher.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a teacher and mentor?**

RM: Brilliant and transforming. He could be difficult (as many would attest) and one had to make sure to stay in his good graces. He was also fun and often embarrassing to socialize with, due to the shenanigans he often displayed in public places.

**JAW: What is the most important thing you gained from your experience with him?**

RM: He brought all my previous knowledge (all excellent, from previous teachers) to real maturity. My technique was refined under his guidance and he was most influential in how I approach the manipulation of time as an organist and conductor.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a colleague?**

RM: He could be terrifying but he always admired and respected me – which was a great honor, but often terrifying as well! He often remarked that he and I were “the same”. That’s one of the greatest compliments I’ve ever been paid – but also a bit frightening as well, due to his often abrasive personality! I always felt unworthy.

**JAW: Having recorded the Missa Brevis (1996) at your former parish, tell me about that experience. Did the composer give you permission to interrupt the score or did he prefer the music to be performed strictly as he indicates in the score?**

RM: I think his markings and indications in many of his scores are inconsistent. There are some errors in that score as well. I think in performing his music, one has to use a little bit of common sense if something seems to be in error. I felt privileged in approaching that piece, as I had previously performed the work under his direction.

**JAW: In preparing for that recording, what did you find to be the greatest difficulties for the choral singer and the soloist? The conductor?**

RM: His choral music is vocally demanding. Also, his choral music was written primarily for professional singers in NYC, of a certain type – mostly “big” voices. Taking that expectation and trying to make it work with a different sort of choir (one more in the English cathedral tradition, and not all professional) was a challenge. But he heard us perform the piece prior to recording it, and was very complimentary, so I was encouraged that I/we were on the right track.

**JAW: What do you feel is important for a conductor to know about his choral music?**

RM: As much about McNeil himself as possible, and the context in and for which he wrote the music.

**JAW: Andrew Yeargin's dissertation categories his music into three phases. Do you agree with these classifications or would you categorize them differently?**

**Phase I – Post-Neoclassic, influenced by Stravinsky.**

**Phase II – Serialism.**

**Phase III – Conservative/Hyper-Romantic.**

RM: I have studied his overall oeuvre far less extensively than Andrew, but in a general sense, this sounds reasonable to me. I think it possibly is a bit of an over-generalization, but again, Andrew has studied the matter far more than I.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

RM: Some of his greatest works, in my opinion, either are out of print or unpublished. His unaccompanied *Missa In die tribulationis*, written for Palm Sunday at St. Mary the Virgin, is a stunning work (and extremely difficult), now out of print. It captures the tragedy of the Passion as well or better than any other work I know, but in miniature. His *Had I but pinions*, a later and more Romantic work, is unbelievably stunning.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

RM: Even those he admired or loved best could quickly fall out of favor. One had to consciously tend to a relationship with him to keep it functional.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

RM: He was all of those things to me, in spades. I was very grateful. But I know that I had to desire to stay in good relationship with him. He had a very good heart, but a lot of other things could get in the way.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

RM: McNeil would share outrageous stories about his past, filled with extraordinary personal detail (and sometimes possibly "dramatized for TV"). Yet he could be extremely elusive about factual details of his life, especially "when/why/how". A fairly G-rated example is the time he told me about how Beaumont, TX, used to have a fantastic red-light district. When asked how he knew that or what took him to Beaumont, he seemed flabbergasted that we would ask or not know. His answer was, "The oil business." He often would look stunned when I would recall some outlandish story he'd shared with me, saying "Who told you about that? Don't tell my wife."

**JAW: How do you want McNeil to be remembered?**

RM: As one of the great musical geniuses of his time, a “complete musician”.

**JAW: With you having a personal connection to McNeil, are there any stories that you would like to share about him that would give us an insight to his personality or musicianship?**

RM: I have nearly hundreds of stories about him, many of which are not appropriate for public discussion. But I go back to something I mentioned earlier: he was perhaps most brutal to musicians who he felt were not up to par. He saw this as a character failing on their part. While his treatment of them could be unjustifiably harsh, the root of this is that I think he saw music-making as something so important, so genuine, and so deep, that approaching it without absolute excellence was a betrayal of the art. (At the same time, I don’t think he would be dismissive of amateur musicians for whom music was an avocation rather than their chief calling, but if he thought someone of mediocre talent was “masquerading” as a professional musician, he would respond highly unfavorably.)

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn’t ask or that you feel is important to note?**

RM: Just that as an organist, his genius ought to be further divided into his skill as an interpreter of other music (with a deep interest in historical performance practice), and as an improviser. As a teacher, he was hugely formative to me in both realms.

**KYLE BABIN**

Former Student, Manhattan School of Music  
Seminarian, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA  
Interviewed: November 7, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

KB: 2004

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

KB: As Professor of Organ at Manhattan School of Music

**JAW: What inspired you to write a history of St. Mary's music program?**

KB: I was toying with a topic on organ music in Mexico, but I realized that I wasn't entirely inspired by the topic, nor did I have the money to travel to Mexico and do the research I needed! I also found that scholars who had previously done research on that topic weren't especially willing to assist others doing similar research, probably for competitive reasons. The archivist at St. Mary's actually suggested the topic of a history of music at St. Mary's to me. I was immediately interested, but my initial concerns were whether or not it would be "substantive" and "academic" enough. It turns out that more people have probably read that dissertation than probably would have read a document on Mexican organ music!

**JAW: As an organist, how did McNeil come to know the canon of choral music?**

KB: I'm not entirely sure, but McNeil was a Renaissance man in many ways. He had an astounding intellect and curiosity, and I imagine that's what drew him to choral music, aside from working in churches.

**JAW: At St. Mary the Virgin, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire? Which composers come to mind?**

KB: He did a bit of everything, from early polyphony to newly-commissioned works. For example, the *Messe de Notre Dame* by Guillaume de Machaut and *Missa brevis* by Ron Roxbury.

**JAW: As a composer of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century styles, how did McNeil feel about early music? And early music performance practices?**

KB: McNeil adored early music and was well versed in performance practice. I personally studied a number of early music pieces with him. He was a constant learner, and he had taken time to study performance practice with various people. He was always willing to change his ideas on performance practice techniques based on new information. He was not a static artist.



**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs?**

KB: This is hard for me to say, since my major experience with him was related to organ music. However, I think I once heard a radio interview that he did on choral music, where he mentioned not liking a “white” sound, which I take to be an excessively contrived “straight-tone” sound. I think he was fine with vibrato, but my hunch is that he would always want the choral sound to match the style of music.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

KB: I believe he sang as a boy chorister in a church choir in Alabama, but beyond that I have no knowledge of his vocal training.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in the choir at St. Mary the Virgin? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)?**

KB: I’m not sure on the number of professional singers. I also have no recollection of McNeil describing how he chose such singers. I think the singers had a variety of backgrounds: probably not so much musical theatre, but definitely choral, early music, and perhaps some opera. Again, I don’t have substantive knowledge on this.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations for the chorus than the solo singer?**

KB: I gather from conversations with McNeil that he had *very* high expectations for his singers. He was a demanding musician. I think he expected consummate musicianship from all, solo or choral. However, he did write some pieces specifically geared towards virtuosic voices and soloists.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil’s career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil’s compositional style?**

KB: McNeil wrote music that was extremely well-suited to the liturgy, because he loved, understood, and adored liturgy. Two of my favorite pieces (different in complexity and difficulty level) are his *Missa brevis* and *Improperium*.

**JAW: In reading your document on St. Mary the Virgin there seemed to be a parade of well-known 20<sup>th</sup> century composers like Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Vincent Persichetti writing or visiting the parish. What influence did these composers have on McNeil?**

KB: McNeil sort of imbibed musical styles from a number of people who crossed his path. He studied composition with Persichetti, but to my knowledge, he was just acquaintances with Copland and Barber. Barber also attended St. Mary’s on occasion.

**JAW: In brief, how did the choral music or the music program in general at St. Mary the Virgin differ from other prominent churches in NYC and most particularly other Episcopal parishes?**

KB: St. Mary's specialized in Continental European Catholic sacred music, which compared to most other Episcopal churches in NYC at the time he was at St. Mary's, was somewhat unusual, I think. He also premiered a number of choral works. Music was extremely eclectic at St. Mary's.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. How did these traits effect his role at St. Mary's?**

KB: I think it led to a love-hate relationship with clergy, and I believe it ultimately led to his leaving St. Mary's. Given St. Mary's building length of a NYC city block, it was said that the Rector of St. Mary's was the "Rector of 47<sup>th</sup> St." and McNeil was the "Rector of 46<sup>th</sup> St."!

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. How did these traits benefit him at St. Mary's?**

KB: He mentored a number of people while there. He also sponsored a number of budding young composers. I imagine he had many admirers and friends while serving there.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

KB: I found that I knew some incredibly personal details of McNeil's life, but in some areas, I felt like a veil had been drawn, and that there was much I didn't know about him. McNeil could be guarded and ambivalent about some things in his life, but he could also be quite open—often extraordinarily so.

**ANDREW YEARGIN**

Former Student, Manhattan School of Music  
Director of Music and Organist, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, NYC  
Interviewed: October 29, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

AHY: 2006. My Organ Improvisation class at Westminster Choir College (taught that semester by Dr. Justin Bischof, a former student of McNeil's) took a "field trip" to New York to hear McNeil give one of his last—and most masterful—performances of his career: an improvisation on the stations of the cross based upon musical themes submitted by Ned Rorem, punctuated with readings of the Claudel poems by Vicky Sirota. A more detailed accounting of this first encounter with McNeil is in the preface of my doctoral dissertation.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

AHY: I was his student (Master's 2007–2009, DMA 2011–2015) and concurrently became his semi-unofficial assistant at Holy Trinity for the duration of his tenure there (2007–2014) before succeeding him as Director of Music. He and I developed a closer kinship than existed with most of his other students from his last decade of life. I think we had a lot of similarities and he seemed to see me both as a son and perhaps as a reflection of himself at my age. Either way, we developed a deep sense of mutual respect and trust that made us in many ways closer than teacher and student...he was more like a mentor. This was largely beneficial for me—there was a great deal one could learn from him about SO many things far beyond music—and he derived a lot of satisfaction from the role of father-figure. I admit it was also at times irritating, because he would call ANY TIME day or night about the most unimportant or irrelevant matters, though they were always "dire emergencies" to him! All this aside, he was my fiercest champion to his dying day and he stopped at nothing to do everything he could for me and my career. Most of his former students will tell you he made no secret of playing favorites in his studio, and I would wager a guess that those he was closest to may have a similar assessment of their personal relationships with him.

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

AHY: Relentless. I'm still in awe of his earlier years and how he rose to such heights of technical skill, knowledge and notoriety in what seems to be such a short time. Of course, having only known him in his later life, it always seemed to me that he was born with a sense of absolute musical perfection and that it came to him effortlessly. Despite all this, he was always eager to continue learning and experiencing new ideas...and never backed down from loudly voicing his opinion about the music or the musician in question.

**JAW: To you, what sticks out most about his musicianship?**

AHY: It wasn't just well-polished technique and flawless playing. And it was well polished and flawless...he had a fire in his eyes when he played that burned straight through his fingers. He could play something as inane as a C-major scale or a single chord on a single stop and your hair would stand on end. He could make the most boring and innocuous music spring to life and teem with passion. It came from a place that was so deeply-informed and studied—he amalgamated multiple schools of thought on “correct” performance practice spanning every era and genre, and he even denounced many “established” opinions on performance practice. For instance, he roundly disagreed with Robert Glasgow on the interpretation and performance of the music of Franck. Glasgow taught dozens of students at Michigan over the decades and McNeil and Glasgow were well acquainted and both studied with Catherine Crozier. But McNeil said that Glasgow's interpretation of Franck “neutered” what he described as some of the most passionately Romantic music in the organ repertoire! “It's WAGNER, God d\*\*\* it!” he once exclaimed to a student who was soberly meandering through the middle section of Franck's Chorale in A Minor. McNeil preferred to approach the music of Franck the way Demessieux and Falcinelli did, a school of thought supported by Louis Robilliard, a colleague whose recordings of Franck's organ music were required listening in McNeil's studio. McNeil was deeply informed about every aspect of the repertoire, even down to the dark corners of some of the neglected and obscure early pieces for the instrument. He could talk at great length about the minute and subtle differences in technique between organists of the different states of Italy during the Renaissance (differences which McNeil would point out were neither minute NOR subtle!), while few American organists can name more than three organ composers of that particular time and place. He could have made THE definitive recordings of every nook and cranny of the organ's massive repertoire. His knowledge informed his playing in a way that complemented his perfect technique. It was extraordinary. Even in his final years.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a teacher and mentor?**

AHY: Much of what I say in my dissertation about him as a teacher comes from my own personal experience. But I will say that, when I first started studying with him, a part of me never EVER wanted to find out what would happen if I came to a lesson unprepared. Even when his health began to decline, his energy was always bolstered somehow during a lesson...he could go for 2–2.5 hours before saying, “Well I think that's enough for today, my boy. It's time for LUNCHEON!” I've had a number of outstanding teachers. Many of them were what I would call “coaches” more so than pedagogues. They were highly-skilled at helping a student to fine-tune a piece that is already well-learned and tighten the screws just before a performance. But the road was always a little rockier during the earlier stages of learning repertoire. One of the greatest pedagogues I had before studying with McNeil was Matthew Lewis, a member of the organ faculty at Westminster Choir College and the Juilliard School and a protégé of Jon Gillock. Matt had a way of giving direction and instruction that seemed to magically unlock the most challenging of pieces. Matt was the one who encouraged me to audition for McNeil when I was applying for grad schools, and I soon discovered that McNeil, as a teacher, was

gifted in the same way as Matt, but with another lifetime of experience and an even more exacting regimen. I grew more as a musician in the complete sense in my first month studying with McNeil Robinson than I had in my first few years of undergrad.

**JAW: What is the most important thing you gained from your experience with him?**

AHY: Musically...an extremely deep sensitivity to informed performance practice balanced with a practical application of all aspects of history, theory, technique. And that's just the tip of the iceberg, but these answers are supposed to be brief! Apart from music, I learned a great deal from him by observing his behavior in various settings. His personality was one of emotional extremes; he could go from total elation to nuclear meltdown in the blink of an eye. As was said in one of his obituaries, he did not suffer fools easily. He was quick to insult—be it a total stranger or an old acquaintance—and he routinely burned bridges. While I can't and don't endorse such behavior, it did teach me a lot about dealing with difficult people in a professional sense. It also made me think twice about wasting my time on people who do not have your best interests in mind. McNeil was fond of making the toast, "Here's to those who love us well; all the rest can go to hell!" Over the years, I've also discovered myself picking up many of his more "colorful" habits (something many of his former students have also noticed in themselves!)...for instance I rarely see the need to mince words when asked about a particular subject, regardless of who is asking. This isn't something I picked up growing up in North Carolina, I assure you!

**JAW: In your dissertation you speak of McNeil grooming you to take his place at Holy Trinity. Briefly speak about that process.**

AHY: As we were descending the stairs from the organ gallery at Holy Trinity just after my first lesson with him in late August 2007, he remarked, "You know, this would be an excellent job for you...fabulous organ, plenty of money, supportive clergy." It seemed odd for him to say that after having only known me a matter of days, and I wasn't sure what he was getting at at the time. His health was certainly more robust then, but he was still not the model specimen of a human body in its mid-sixties. When he took the job at Holy Trinity, he already considered himself "retired" from church work. From the very beginning he began to delegate many routine administrative tasks to me. This was often somewhat complicated, given that I almost always had a church job of my own...I held a brief interim position at a Presbyterian church in Ringwood, N.J. before becoming the organ scholar at St. John the Divine in NYC, where the sudden resignation of the music director at the Cathedral magnified my responsibilities a hundredfold since the organist (Tim Brumfield) was forced to become interim music director. From 2008 I was organist and choirmaster at Christ Episcopal Church in Manhasset, N.Y., a church where McNeil sent many of his best students over the years to work under his longtime friend and colleague, Rev. David Lowry. Despite all this, McNeil routinely called upon me to accompany his choir whenever he chose to do more "involved" repertoire...made possibly only by the timing of the solemn mass at Holy Trinity (12:30 P.M.) giving me time to rush back to the city from Long Island. I was tasked with at times keeping up with

choir payroll, finding subs for the choir (or replacements for those who “would never sing here again,” as he put it). As the years went on, he became more and more infirm. His last full season (2012–13) was largely a co-directorship between him and me. He began the 2013–14 season, but by mid-October was no longer able to climb up to the gallery and would sit in a pew downstairs during mass. He stopped coming to work entirely by late November, leaving the practical matters of the job to me almost entirely (though he did plenty of “backseat driving” from his apartment living room!). The winter of 13-14 was a tough time for me, because the full weight of his job was resting on my shoulders concurrently with my job in Manhasset...itself having become a difficult situation thanks to the retirement of David Lowry and appointment of an interim rector who had nothing more than a grudging tolerance for music in liturgy. McNeil was still nominally “Director of Music” until his official retirement from Holy Trinity in June 2014. The pastor at Holy Trinity, Msgr. Thomas Leonard, was also due to retire that summer and he felt it best to facilitate McNeil’s amicable departure to make for a tidy transition to the next pastor. I continued as the acting music director until September of that year, when, after an 8-week interview process of three candidates, I was appointed Director of Music and Organist. The new pastor, Msgr. Thomas Sandi, felt it was only fair (and good business practice) to allow other candidates to apply for the job (a decision I agree with), but McNeil took it very personally that I wasn’t automatically named music director after his departure. He advocated strongly for my appointment.

**JAW: What is it like to have succeeded McNeil Holy Trinity?**

AHY: Everyone there had gotten to know me for seven years during McNeil’s tenure there, so everyone already knows me as being “one of Robinson’s boys,” as Msgr. Leonard put it. I also made use of Holy Trinity’s facilities, the organ and the professional Schola Cantorum in the completion of my doctoral dissertation, which focused on McNeil’s music. The new pastor, who never met McNeil and only knows of him through secondhand accountings from me and other staff members, knows that I am a proponent of McNeil’s music and legacy. However, I have also done many things to separate myself from McNeil in my time there: implementing a much more highly-structured program, taking over many long-neglected administrative duties, beginning a concert series and incorporating a wider repertoire of choral repertoire, including many things McNeil was not terribly fond of (e.g., some early-to-mid-Twentieth century Anglican choral music, the 19th century French choral music that ISN’T terrible like the masses of Vierne and Widor, etc.). I (and others) feel his presence there many times, but in a lot of ways things are better than they were. He just wasn’t able to put the kind of energy and effort into the program that he would have liked.

**JAW: What mark do you feel McNeil left on the music program at Holy Trinity?**

AHY: He certainly added to the prestige of a church that has had a long history of excellence in choral music...something unique among the overwhelming majority of Catholic churches in the world. He helped to remind the organ community of New York that one of its greatest instruments (and rooms) is right there on the Upper West Side. Of course, he made marks in other ways. I’ve spoken to people who were frustrated that “the

music director before you” never returned phone calls and wasn’t at all helpful in facilitating the use of the church for outside concerts, etc. Former brides have spoken of how intransigent he was with repertoire for weddings (HE would choose the music and forego allowing brides the liberty of making selections...something I personally applauded him for!). Otherwise, most people have various anecdotes about his personality or sense of humor.

**JAW: In your dissertation, you place McNeil’s music into three compositional phases:**

**Phase I – Post-Neoclassic, influenced by Stravinsky. In your document, you refer to elements of Stravinsky’s style being present in Robinson’s compositions. What elements are present?**

**Phase II – Serialism. Do you feel his work with Persichetti was the inspiration for those works? Do you feel there is a reason that the compositional output of this phase is smaller than the others?**

AHY: McNeil himself said that, when he composed the Messe Solennelle, he had Stravinsky in his head at all times. It’s all he could think of. He even says in an interview with the Vocal Area Network (available online) that when he was younger, he was “just undone by Stravinsky.”

The serial pieces were I think mostly a phase he went through. In the same interview with VAN, he says he “went through serialism.” It doesn’t seem like a ringing note of enthusiasm for the genre as he looks back on his career. It was what young composers of the time were studying and it was en vogue to be a part of the avant-garde. Persichetti was an ardent supporter of McNeil’s career. I’m sure there was some influence there. He was, of course, exceptionally well-versed in the theoretical application of serial music and always made a point to cover the music of expressionist/atonal/serial composers in great detail.

**JAW: Charles Wuorinen states his encounter with McNeil was so brief and not worth mentioning, yet Wuorinen is listed in publications to have been a teacher of McNeil. Do you know anything about their relationship or his influence in McNeil’s serial compositions?**

AHY: As far as I know, McNeil regarded Wuorinen VERY highly. He used CW’s text Simple Composition extensively with improvisation and composition students. I think Wuorinen still lives in the same neighborhood where Holy Trinity is located... I’m not sure if they had much or any contact in the later years. I don’t recall any personal insights into the nature of their relationship. It’s always possible that they only knew each other in passing and McNeil magnified that in his head! But he always took great care to introduce Wuorinen’s sacred choral works in his Choral Repertoire classes. He had a lot of respect for and interest in Wuorinen’s work.

**Phase III – Conservative/Hyper-Romantic. What is your defining factor for this category? Conservative tonal harmony, traditional form, or simplicity of writing? What is meant by hyper-Romantic? Is it related to neoconservative postmodernism or neo-romanticism?**

AHY: The Phase III category could be described as something of a catch-all, broadly defined as the pieces which seem to meld aspects of Neo-Romanticism with McNeil's trademark conservatism (i.e. highly-structured form). And I mean hyper-Romantic in the sense that the harmonies don't seem to push the envelope the way the music of his other Phases do...they are "tonally Romantic" in the way I would describe the harmonies of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. The most blatant example of this would be his motet "Had I But Pinions."

**JAW: Having conducting and played numerous compositions of McNeil's what do find to be the most challenging aspect of his choral music? What about the most rewarding?**

AHY: It's taxing on the singers (BRUTAL for sopranos in many places). It's taxing on the accompanist. Much of his music can't be done by "just anybody," and I think he derived some twisted degree of pleasure from that! What makes it rewarding is that, when it's done well, it's magical.

**JAW: What do you feel is important for a conductor to know about his choral music?**

AHY: As rigidly opinionated as he was, he was ALWAYS open to having an informed discussion about interpretation. For instance, with the *Missa Brevis*, he always preferred the Kyrie to be fast with a darker, heavier sound (which blows my mind considering its contrapuntal texture, but Robert McCormick insists it's true). When Robert was rehearsing for the CD recording of the MB, McNeil heard the choir at St. Paul's sing it at a more relaxed tempo and with a light, clear timbre. I think he was won over because he listened to the recording with me once and said, "Isn't that fabulous?." I think it gave the movement an aura of mystery it had been previously lacking. So never feel as if there is only one rigid interpretation. And, if he wouldn't agree with you, take some solace in the fact that he isn't alive to reduce you to a puddle of tears!

**JAW: It has been noted in your dissertation that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits? Can you provide an example?**

AHY: I can think of myriad examples, but in all honesty I'm not sure I'm fully comfortable with any of them appearing in print next to my name! Not yet, anyway! Suffice it to say, his often acerbic personality is without a doubt the primary reason why he isn't widely celebrated and remembered with the same level of revered esteem as many of his longtime friends and associates who are also recently deceased, like Gerre Hancock or John Scott. He had no filter, and that doesn't play well in a world where one must be carefully attuned to the feelings and sensitivities of others. It didn't always come



from a malicious place. In fact, he mostly delighted in his ability to shock people by saying totally off-the-wall and uncouth things. It entertained some people. It probably offended far more. I think he rubbed too many people the wrong way.

**JAW: It has been noted in your dissertation that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits? Can you provide an example?**

AHY: He was extremely protective of all of his students; and his “favorite” students in particular. If he ever got any notion—no matter how far-fetched—that ANYONE (a teacher/professor, a fellow organist, a member of the clergy...it didn’t matter) happened to think of his prized pupils as anything less than extraordinary, he made it his mission to rain hellfire down on that unfortunate soul! If you so much as cleared your throat during a lesson, he became convinced that you were afflicted with something “serious” and would insist total bedrest for a week and call you with a long list of premiere New York physicians, “vital” herbal supplements and offers to bring you “soup.” He had had the good fortune of experiencing many of life’s opulent pleasures, and it was his fervent wish that he introduce new generations of his students to many of these pleasures: primarily food and drink. On a three-day organ studio trip to New England to see dozens of fabulous instruments in Connecticut and Massachusetts, we spent more time in four-star restaurants than we did playing organs! He wanted us to have an appreciation not just for the practice room but for living life and enjoying every minute. He was the life of the party (or death of the party, depending on whose party it was!) and he took it upon himself to make absolutely certain you were having a good time!

**JAW: It has been noted in your dissertation that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait? Can you provide an example?**

AHY: Despite his brazen and outspoken personality, there were many things McNeil played very close to the chest; and you never knew from day to day what was “off limits” as a topic of conversation, even between friends. There were also many anecdotes and stories he would tell that, to most people, just seemed far too outrageous to even possibly be true! But then you are left wondering, “He may actually be telling the truth...” I think Chris Creaghan said it best in his eulogy at McNeil’s memorial—that is, the public memorial service held in Oct. 2015, not the private requiem at Holy Trinity earlier that year. In his remembrance, Chris read aloud from an article in *The American Organist* which chronicled the experiences McNeil had traveling from New York to New Haven to give a recital on Friday the 13th. In the span of 18 hours, McNeil was caught up in a comedy of errors which variously involved colleagues having anaphylactic seizures in a restaurant and the bomb squad being called to the train station. Chris characterized a personal relationship with McNeil as having three stages. Stage 1: Amazement at all the uncanny and remarkable stories he recounted of his adventures. Stage 2: Disbelief and doubt, where you question the validity of these stories, because, after all, how could all these things possibly happen to a single individual? And finally (if you last long enough) you reach Stage 3: Resignation that you will never know for sure, and realizing that it’s all somehow mostly true, but hard to tell.

**JAW: How do you want McNeil to be remembered?**

AHY : First and foremost I want McNeil to be remembered, period. He reached heights as an improviser and performer that few who came in generations after him reached at their zeniths, yet he is often not mentioned in surveys of great American improvisers or composers for the organ. I think much of that has to do with what I discussed earlier, namely his personality being so off-putting to many who meet him for the first time. I remember after Gerre Hancock died, the word so often used to describe him was “beloved.” I remember thinking to myself, “nobody is going to say that about McNeil when he goes,” and wondering how the greater organ community will react to his death, which seemed an imminent possibility at the time. We organists swim in a very small pond, and many are not keen to share that pond with someone who speaks what I call the “naked truth.” For better or worse, our profession is built upon a latticework of interrelationships between colleagues. McNeil had, as he often put it, “nothing left to prove to anyone,” so if he formed a negative opinion about someone he simply didn’t see the need to pretend. His “realness” is in many ways refreshing, but it damaged his legacy nonetheless. When enough time passes and many of those who knew him personally are gone, hopefully all of the negative connotations will pass away as well, leaving his music and his achievements to speak for themselves. We remember many great composers of the past who had reputations for being difficult to get along with or rude to their colleagues (Beethoven, Saint-Saëns, Reger...). But that’s not what’s important. In these years so soon after his death, it’s our jobs as his disciples to champion his career the way he championed ours. I will continue to push for the publication of many of his unpublished works and will continue to encourage their dissemination and performance.

**JAW: With you having a personal connection to McNeil, are there any stories that you would like to share about him that would give us an insight to his personality or musicianship?**

AHY: Well, like I said, most of the best stories are not really suitable for print in an academic work! Rather, I will simply say that he consumed a large portion of my life in the past decade and so much of who and what I am as a musician and as a professional are thanks to his influence. All musicians tend to form special bonds with their teachers, but he occupies a very special place in my memory. I think of him in some way every day, and I hear his voice loudly in my head, chiming in on just about everything! And I smile and can’t help but laugh.

**PHILLIP R. LAMB**

Former Student, Manhattan School of Music  
Director of Music and Organist, St. George's Church, Queens, NY  
Interviewed: October 19, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

PRL: I met him in early March of 2012.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

PRL: I knew him first and foremost as my major organ teacher during my graduate studies at the Manhattan School of Music. Like many of his students, we grew to be friends.

**JAW: McNeil had a varied career as a musician. In what order would you rank his multifaceted career: academic, church musician, composer, organist? (Ex. I would rank McNeil as church musician, organist, composer, and then academic.)**

PRL: In my perception, McNeil was all of these equally. While my experience with him dealt primarily with his academic side, all of these aspects were informed by the others. I.e. he was such an effective teacher due to his extensive studies and career as a performer. His improvisational prowess was informed by his mastery of composition, and so on. Let's not forget that, in addition to these aspects of his career, he was also a master chef!

**JAW: How would you describe McNeil's quest for and commitment to musical excellence?**

PRL: McNeil's life story itself describes his quest for and commitment to musical excellence. It's clear that he sought out the finest teachers (some truly monumental names) of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for his education. The multi faceted career that was mentioned in the previous question is also a testament to this quest.

**JAW: What sticks out most about his musicianship?**

PRL: A very major aspect of his musicianship that sticks out to me is his great technical facility. Much of our time early on was spent – let's say – “correcting” the manual and pedal technique that I had been taught previously. Although I am too young to have experienced him at the peak of his abilities, it's easy to surmise how tremendous his technical strength must have been through the way he rebuilt my own technique (for the better). Something more, it seems he was able to absorb and authentically emulate almost any style. For a self-explanatory example of this, visit the audio section on [www.mcneilrobinson.com](http://www.mcneilrobinson.com) and listen to his piece “*Angels*.” Then, listen to his final

performance, at Grace Church in New York, on YouTube. They are quite different, equally beautiful, and demonstrate his true mastery of a wide array of musical styles.

**JAW: What was McNeil like as a teacher and mentor?**

PRL: My initial reaction was “What have I gotten myself in to?” He could be entertaining, terrifying, everything in between, but always, *always* helpful. After awhile, you built up a tolerance to the antics, but never questioned that he was the best; a true fountain of knowledge. We worked extensively on technique, and of course applied this to study of repertoire, improvisation and composition. McNeil’s insight was particularly indispensable regarding 20<sup>th</sup> century French repertoire, since he was fortunate enough to study with many of these towering figures. Such direct perspective is gradually disappearing as those of his generation pass away.

**JAW: What is the most important thing you gained from your experience with him?**

PRL: There is so much, I’m not sure that there is any one important thing. Musically speaking, he instilled within me a solid technique and sense of rhythm and discipline that I did not have previously. He really, *really* taught me how to practice efficiently and effectively. As a person, I learned patience. I now feel as if I can handle any difficult personality; surely (and hopefully) no one that I encounter will ever surpass McNeil in this regard.

**JAW: What is your knowledge of his choral music?**

PRL: I’m familiar with the major works, but have not yet had the opportunity to take part in a performance. Shortly after beginning my current church position, I found several simple, clearly early anthems that I had not been familiar with before and may be out of print (?). Among them is a very lovely and tender setting of the Ave Maria.

**JAW: Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil’s compositional style?**

PRL: These two pieces for me would be his *Missa in Die Tribulationis*, and the *Messe Solennelle*. If I may mention a piece outside of his choral opus, it would be *Angels*, for organ, strings, and celesta. It is not (yet) published, but can be listened to on [www.mcneilrobinson.com](http://www.mcneilrobinson.com).

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was overly opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

PRL: That is an understatement. For me, his antics ranged from hilarious to horrifyingly embarrassing, mildly annoying to extremely irritating. In lessons or class, any failure to *immediately* grasp a new concept was met with instant annoyance on his part. A second

failure to grasp this concept was met with instant harshness. Forget about a third time. Despite whatever level his harshness reached, the lesson always ended with: “*Has this been helpful, m’boy?*” The answer was always and truthfully, yes. I absolutely must mention restaurant etiquette. McNeil had what I’ll refer to as an extensive and impossible list of pet-peeves, and woe became any server or fellow diner that infringed upon this list. Even now, when I see a server do something that would’ve set off a Robinson tirade, I have a certain gut reaction. His temper was very quick, and could be set off by something as simple as asking him to repeat himself, or by a server being too talkative for his liking. In a very strange way, I miss it.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

PRL: My most tangible example of McNeil’s generosity is him personally funding the scholarship I was awarded. It was not until towards the end of our time that I was made aware of this, and he never asked for anything other than simply doing my best. For this I am beyond grateful. If you were his student or friend, he was your most loyal advocate.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

PRL: He certainly was. Going in for a lesson, a class, dining, sitting at a bar, or simply answering his call, you never knew what to expect. I think some people may be put-off by this quality, but in general, I found it to be exciting. Some of the more bizarre and memorable situations I’ve found myself in began by answering his call on a lazy Saturday afternoon. There is also a very real sense of mystery about his music.

**JAW: How do you want McNeil to be remembered?**

PRL: I want him to be remembered exactly as he was: a consummate musician, composer, and pedagogue with a tremendous personality. I hope that in the near future, more of his music will be published so that it may be performed more often; I truly believe that his work is at home among the best of 20<sup>th</sup> century organ and choral music.

**DAVID LOWRY**

Former Clergy, St. Mary the Virgin, NYC

Personal Friend of Robinson

Interviewed: October 14, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil?**

DL: 1969, although I had heard Neil play (often) at Church of St. Mary the Virgin in fall of 1968.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

DL: Mostly as friend, advisor and concert promoter—that is what I did. Neil was an inspiration to me because of his talents.

**JAW: What denomination did McNeil grow up in?**

DL: I believe he was in an evangelical sort of church in Birmingham, Alabama, but we had no discussion of his religious upbringing.

**JAW: As a priest, I am sure you and McNeil had conversations on religion. What was McNeil's thoughts on religion?**

DL: Neil's religious beliefs were eclectic and very personal. They were often tied to the people he either respected or despised. He was traditional in worship, but if he respected someone he could be very accommodating in the music he wrote and performed. Neil often talked about his personal prayer life.

**JAW: Related to the previous question, it has been said that McNeil struggled with whether he identified as an Episcopalian or Catholic. Are you able to shed some light on this?**

DL: Neil worked where he could and where he could use his talents. He loved the last Roman Catholic he worked in (mostly because of the priest there), he struggled at the previous Roman Catholic church at which he worked (Holy Family at the UN), he had good and not so good times at the Park Avenue Christian Church and he had many (but not all) good times at the Park Avenue Synagogue. Neil's time at St. Mary the Virgin was very complex—it made much of his career, but St. Mary's was every bit as complex and Neil was. So denomination and even religious identity meant less than Neil's relationship with the people and institutional setting in which he worked and worshipped; hence, back to Neil's faith was more personal than institutional.

**JAW: Sometimes extremely talented artists face difficulties being employed in religious institutions. What was the greatest difficulties McNeil faced?**

DL: Neil struggled with incompetence. He was far more talented than I am and he (and I) knew it. I knew I had to live with that. When less talented people tried to reign-in Neil there were conflicts. Neil never learned (had to learn?) to deal with people for whom he worked and whom he did not respect.

**JAW: During McNeil's tenure at Park Avenue Synagogue, he held various other Christian church positions. What do you think contributed to this long tenure at Park Avenue Synagogue versus the other Christian churches?**

DL: I think the cantors liked and respected Neil and gave him support and freedom. The Park Avenue Synagogue also paid well and had many resources to support music. Many of the churches at which Neil worked did not have supporting people dealing with music and were cutting down on choirs and programs that hurt Neil's relationships with them.

**JAW: Where did McNeil get his inspiration for writing his music? For improvisation?**

DL: Neil was more of a student of music than many people knew. He knew the work of many great composers inside and out. He did not copy the music of others, but they were always part of Neil's unique talent as a composer and improviser.

**JAW: What was McNeil's desire for after his death?**

DL: To have some of his unpublished music published, some of his music that was published but no longer available re-issued and his recording of the Stations and a recording of his most important choral works recorded for posterity.

**JAW: You have been working to get a commercial recording of his music. Talk to me about this project.**

DL: The Stations will be released first. That is getting close and I will be able to finance that myself. The choral music recording is more expensive and I am working on how to get that done.

**JAW: What did McNeil feel his greatest accomplishment was in life?**

DL: I really don't know. Neil and I dealt more with his disappointments.

**JAW: Outside of the church, synagogue, and academic setting, what was McNeil like on a personal level?**

DL: My wife and I always loved being with Neil. He was very bright, witty, learned. He was always generous to me and my family.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

DL: I heard often about how difficult Neil was to many people, but he was not that to me.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

DL: See the answer above.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

DL: There were many Neils. I knew the Neil he chose to reveal to me. I suspect he revealed other Neils to other people.

**JAW: Looking back at the following three questions; is there any one reason you feel McNeil was this type of personality? What did McNeil say about his own personality?**

DL: Little. Neil was Neil and one could either accept him as he was—or move-on. I was more than glad to accept him.



**CANTOR DAVID LEFKOWITZ**

Senior Cantor at Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, NY

Cantor Emeritus since 2009

Interviewed: December 16, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil?**

DL: We met in 1971, for a nationally televised concert held at Temple Rodeph Shalom in New York City. Sponsored by three multi-denominational cantorial associations, and planned by Cantor Ephraim Biran of the Temple and composer/conductor Gershon Kingsley, the program also included McNeil Robinson at the organ, and the renowned Cantor David Kusevitsky and myself among the soloists. I was serving an important musical congregation in Paterson NJ, where composer Max Helfman had formed their famous Choral Society forty years earlier. It was still functioning at that time, with us performing not only musical services but also regular concerts with symphony orchestra, all under the direction of the celebrated maestro Abraham Kaplan. For this concert, together with Mr. Robinson, I was asked to perform Kurt Weil's "Kiddush" – commissioned thirty-five years earlier and also made famous by Cantor David Putterman, who was the distinguished cantor of Park Avenue Synagogue and who had brought McNeil to his synagogue in 1965. Putterman had also, just in 1970, commissioned Mr. Kingsley to compose the first "rock" Sabbath service featuring the newly-invented "MOOG SYNTHESIZER" – along with Robinson at the organ, Putterman as soloist and Kingsley as conductor.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

DL: When Cantor Putterman announced his impending retirement early in 1976, I was interviewed and chosen to be his successor, and had an amazing thirty-three-year musical partnership with Mr. Robinson as my organist and regular choral conductor.

**JAW: What was your impression of McNeil's understanding of liturgy and the role in which the music complemented the spoken word in your tradition?**

DL: (Please note also the additional shared documents: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service publicity 4-6-1985 – Rabbi Nadich's tribute and the recording of Neil speaking @ his 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service on Saturday, 3-31-1990; the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary service on 11-17-1995; Cantor Lefkowitz's tribute @ his 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the Congregational Singers on 5-19-2005; McNeil's remarkable 2007 essay for Park Avenue Synagogue's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Journal; and Cantor Lefkowitz's joyous interview with Mr. Robinson @ his Retirement Celebration Concert on 5-22-2012!)

– McNeil often told of his deep studies with Cantor Putterman, with Rabbi Lincoln and with me. I still have some of the Prayer books in which Neil wrote his study notes which he then truly mastered! Whenever he was writing a musical setting for the liturgical Hebrew text, he not only utilized his knowledge of hundreds of settings from other composers, but he would review, with me and with the Rabbis, the very detailed

phrasing, accentuation and emotional textual feelings of specific words in order to have these actually lead to the creation of his music!

**JAW: How would you characterize McNeil's talent, including his abilities as organist, conductor, synagogue musician, and composer?**

DL: There is no doubt, from my most fortunate career experience with this "beyond-description" musician and divinely-gifted human being, that McNeil Robinson will hopefully be remembered as the finest synagogue master of the organ, who brought such sacred dignity and glory to Jewish liturgy and worship. And his tenure of forty-seven years at P.A.S. and unique interwoven accompanying of my improvised Cantorial chanting left a legacy that will live on for the future, because of the preserved Archival Recordings of our Services.

**JAW: With McNeil growing up in the Christian tradition and later working in both the Christian and Temple traditions, how well did he adapt to the liturgy and music of the Temple tradition?**

DL: He was amazingly interested and eager to learn everything pertaining to music in synagogue tradition. He wrote detailed notes in a prayerbook from his studies with Cantor Putterman, my predecessor, in the mid 1960's. I still have that prayer book and also the copy with his notes from a newer prayerbook that we started using in 1983.

**JAW: In brief how does the choral music in the Temple tradition differ from that of the Christian Tradition?**

DL: Choral music in the synagogue is entirely based on the actual Liturgy and specific musical modes ("nusach") of the Evening and Morning services for Sabbath, Festivals and High Holidays. McNeil was proficient in every detail (which is very complex) and would comfortably improvise accurately at any spot.

**JAW: McNeil composed a great deal of music for the Synagogue; talk to me about his compositions written for Park Avenue.**

DL: He composed with his own vocabulary and yet synchronized these compositions with careful attention to textual meaning, accurate phrasing and precision in accentuating each word properly. He didn't hesitate to check his accuracy with clergy members. Recently I have uncovered in my files many of his original handwritten manuscripts especially those written for specific occasions, including festive family celebration, as well as my 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and retirement concert services.

**JAW: As the principle musician in your synagogue, how did the music program under McNeil's direction compared to other synagogues in NYC?**

DL: Organists in other congregations admired and emulated McNeil's artistry and achievements, and his contributions to the Park Avenue synagogue music legacy.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

DL: Given the genius and the dedication with which McNeil Robinson always sought to bring the most appropriate high standards to any occasion, I sincerely believe his legacy should focus on his unique accomplishments. While I know that he could be demanding of musicians and displayed quick criticism of their failures or distractions from his inspired details of perfection, he nonetheless always focused on the best musical interpretations of the moment.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

DL: Words cannot really describe the level of respect and appreciation in the unique professional devotion we shared. Our musical interaction was so united that we could improvise with textual and musical integrity that everyone was convinced was composed and rehearsed!

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

DL: I don't relate to this because our four-decade musical unity went beyond this.

**JAW: What were the challenges of working with this type of personality and level of musicianship?**

DL: Those of us who really knew him well were not swayed by quick comments of his that could be disturbing to others. I would often make a short joke or come out with a quick phrase that would immediately bring smiles and bring us back on target!

**JAW: What was rewarding about working with someone of this personality and level of musicianship?**

DL: I will forever be grateful to God for the opportunity to have had this longest musical opportunity that both of us had in our own professional lives!

**JAW: How will you remember McNeil?**

DL: In so many ways, this was the gift of both of our lives!

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

DL: I sincerely thank you for this special opportunity I now have, in being able to share with the world my appreciation of this great human being. As Neil, himself, would say about others he so admired, "When God created that person, he then through away the mold!" –thus maintaining that person's special uniqueness!

**JOHN PAYNE**

Former Minister, Park Avenue Christian Church, NYC

Interviewed: November 7, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil?**

JP: 1984

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

JP: As organist/choirmaster of the congregation I served as senior minister.

**JAW: What was your impression of McNeil's understanding of liturgy and the role in which the music complemented the spoken word in the Disciples of Christ Church?**

JP: Excellent understanding of the historic Roman/Anglican liturgical tradition as well as the liturgical recommendations of the Consultation on Church Union. Because we generally use the Common Lectionary, and follow the church year, his musical choices, while varied, were usually related.

**JAW: Traditionally, the Disciples of Christ denomination doesn't worship in the same liturgical manner, Episcopal, Anglo-Catholic, or Roman Catholic parishes. With McNeil serving mostly highly liturgical churches how well, if at all, did he adapt to the worship style of the Disciples of Christ Church? Feel free to elaborate as needed.**

JP: Fairly well. Because of the Park Avenue Church's 206-year history in New York City (somewhat removed from the Midwestern center of the denomination's strength), and the years of emphasis on excellence in musical offerings, it is on the "high" side of Disciples worship practice. However, as we became more creative and experimental liturgically (one example: liturgical dance), he was often – but not always – uncooperative. Not so much because he opposed these developments, but apparently because it required him to work collegially with other leadership. He never openly opposed my guidance, but found other ways to undercut decisions arrived by consensus.

**JAW: How would you characterize McNeil's talent, including his abilities as organist, conductor, church musician, composer, and academic?**

JP: His service playing was excellent. Hymn tempos, registration excellent. Musical offerings consistently well done, but rather repetitive year after year. Conducting well done. As church musician, his approach in contrast to ours was the source of most of our problems. We emphasize music as a nurturing ministry in which the church musician reflects educational, pastoral approach to music. Neil (he was never called McNeil) had little or no interest in building a musical program from within the community, nor would

he support even talented amateur singers or instrumentalists who could well have participated, but needed at least minimal rehearsal time. One needed to be able to sight-read instantly or he ignored him/her and slowly made an individual feel rejected. As a result a choir of more than thirty when he arrived was reduced by a third of which staff singers were increased from four to twelve. The musical result was excellent, but not significantly improved.

**JAW: As the principle musician in your parish how did the music program under McNeil's direction compared to churches of the same denomination in NYC?**

JP: No comparison would be valid; the few other Disciples congregations in New York were primarily different culturally and ethnically so had different styles of worship.

**JAW: In the church music world, how do you think McNeil should be remembered?**

JP: primarily for his very accessible and lovely choral compositions which evoked grateful responses from the listener. His improvisations linger in memory as well.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JP: See above. He was inconsistent in relationships, not always trustworthy, supportive face-to-face, often negatively critical otherwise. Narcissistic to a degree. Often self-serving. Needed approbation.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JP: His students were very loyal and supportive. If one supported or didn't challenge him, he usually responded in kind. In social situations he could be charming. Liberal politically and socially compassionate. When he ended a long intimate relationship, he was generous financially.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

JP: Difficult to discern. Perhaps his most intimate relationships give a picture. When I first met him he had been in a long-term relationship with another man for decades, which appeared stable. However, others reported his quite excessive behavioral episodes during that period. After he ended this relationship, he married a much younger woman whom he had nurtured for years. He would describe himself as "both ways" sexually which seemed to reflect his inconsistent behavior in other areas of life.

**JAW: What were the challenges of working with this type of personality and level of musicianship?**

JP: Extremely difficult. While I appreciated his many excellent musical gifts and the congregation by and large was appreciative, I slowly concluded he was not well-suited to the role he had in the church. If I had not retired in 1999, I would have likely recommended his dismissal shortly. I strongly supported musical excellence, but also was committed to music as a ministry, an offering, and a setting for the congregation to be given opportunities to participate and grow. Neil could probably function fairly well in a conservatory where emphasis is primarily placed on performance. In a church where performance is valued but also the nurturing of the people to produce music themselves, he too often rejected rather than welcomed involvement.

**JAW: How will you remember McNeil?**

JP: As a very complicated friend and colleague. His musical compositions will, I hope, have a long life. He was very talented, but a very lazy (at least in later years) genius. I saw him deteriorate from an outstanding performer and composer into one coasting on earlier laurels.

**THOMAS P. LEONARD**

Monsignor Holy Trinity Catholic Church, New York City, NY

Interviewed: October 29, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil?**

TPL: I first met him briefly in 1997 when we installed a new Letourneau organ at Holy Trinity Church. He appeared with four other organists to “inaugurate” the new instrument, a French tradition. In September, 2007, he became the organist at the Church, replacing a former student of his, Christopher Berry, who had taken a position in Rome. (North American College) Obviously, we had met that spring in anticipation of the change.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

TPL: I was the Pastor of Holy Trinity Church, and I hired him.

**JAW: What was your impression of McNeil’s understanding of liturgy and the role in which the music complemented the spoken word?**

TPL: Dr. Robinson had a keen understanding of how music supported and enhanced the liturgy, without “crowding”, or overpowering the worship.

**JAW: How would you characterize McNeil’s talent, including his abilities as organist, conductor, church musician, composer, and academic?**

TPL: McNeil was superior in each of these capacities. He used a room in the Rectory, at times, presenting academic material to his graduate students, and then moved to the choir loft so that theory became reality. I watched him at major celebrations become the conductor of the choir and an array of musicians. He had the ability to attract such because they were complimented by his invitation, and it embellished their CV’s. (Editor’s admission: As he wrote, dedicated and named a composition after me at an anniversary, I have a positive prejudice about his talent.)

**JAW: As the principle musician in your parish/synagogue, how did the music program under McNeil’s direction compared to churches in NYC?**

TPL: McNeil’s reputation was acclaimed as a premier organist in New York City. This was acknowledged by musicians, his contemporaries. We were privileged to have him. His long service to the synagogue only strengthened his renown.

**JAW: In the church music world, how do you think McNeil should be remembered?**

TPL: Dr. Robinson should be remembered as a superior organist, extremely hard worker, a singular talent at “improvisation”, and a credit to his profession. His interest in the development of his students endeared him to them.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

TPL: I must say that while I had heard such a rumor about irascible behavior, it was not my experience. It may be that he had mellowed over the years, or there was no need for such as our relationship was not solely about music. He took his profession seriously, and he had no time for complacency or indifference in his talented students. He did have a professional disdain for much of what is called “music” today, and he was not interested in transposing guitar “classics”, i.e. “on Eagle’s Wings, “Here I Am, Lord”.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

TPL: After the Liturgy on Saturday evenings, he would gather with our staff and any guests, and he was always alert to any need. He shared with us some his musical adventures in all parts of the world. He yearly had the choir for dinner in the rectory, and he spared no cost in such a show of appreciation. He took keen interest, and followed the professional careers, of his students. I found him, always, to be most supportive of any thing that I might suggest. His personal gifts at Christmas were always thoughtful and of the highest quality, and embarrassing to receive.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

TPL: Rather than say “man of mystery”, say he was private. When you knew him better, you learned something more. He did not feel the need to make everyone an “intimate”. Being in the “spotlight” because of his talent, he needed at time to be “far from the maddening crowd”.

**JAW: What were the challenges of working with this type of personality and level of musicianship?**

TPL: It was not so much a challenge as a privilege. One had to admire his talent and dedication but he brought, also, a wide interest in the “joy and crisis” of each day. He enjoyed a good story and was keen, as the rest of us, to ponder the “gossip” of the world of music and the Church, and the inter-play between them.

**JAW: What was rewarding about working with someone of this personality and level of musicianship?**

TPL: Much of this might seem repetitive, but it was a privilege for the Church and our congregation to have someone of McNeil’s stature as our musician. He could be



humorous: he had a knowledge of much of the world that he had traveled: he bore “his talents lightly”: he was delightfully human.

**JAW: How will you remember McNeil?**

TPL: For me, he will always be a talented friend, an accomplished musician, a gift to my priesthood and a model of someone who used his talents to brighten the world.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn’t ask?**

TPL: It is my regret, shared with many, that we could not get him to stop smoking. He diminished the years of our enjoyment.

**HOMILY – Funeral Mass for McNeil Robinson**

According to what I was told, there was an ancient French custom that was part of the celebration of a new organ. Apart from its inaugural presentation, other organists were to be invited to play, perhaps to evaluate a newly installed instrument. With that in mind, David Macfarlane, our musical director at the time, invited four organists to celebrate / initiate our new Le Tourneau organ. Three of them - Gerre Hancock, David Higgs, and John Weaver – had selected works of the Masters from their personal repertoires. For the fourth, the program merely said: “McNeil Robinson – Improvisation”.

A time limit was given, somewhat elastic, and generally adhered to, except for McNeil. He did an “improvisation” on his Improvisation as we listened with delight. We were swept away.

It was the night he fell in love with the organ and the night he captured the hearts and the wonder of the people of Holy Trinity. We fell in love with him. It was a dual attraction that only ends today. It is with a sense of sorrow – and of gratitude that we gather.

There is not much that one can say about death that is different. We can repeat the old clichés understanding that they have become trite through repetition. We can mourn our loss and wallow in nostalgia for what was. Or we can celebrate a life, diverse and cosmopolitan, that brought beauty, serenity and a “sounding” of the divine into the lives of unnumbered audiences. Death is commonplace and a surety for us all. It’s the ultimate identification with Christ, adding one’s singular share of suffering to His offering. It’s the answer to the Divine Commission that invites us to partake in the work of salvation. It elevates our daily tasks to the level of the redemptive. It takes one’s talents and uses them to reflect God’s Work, and so to overcome the harshness that distorts that beauty. Great music can do that and in the hands of a Master, our senses and sentiments are lifted, and made to soar. McNeil Robinson did that for us.

I tried to see in the chosen readings a reflection of him. Psalm 150, the last of the Psalms, is filled with the cacophony of musical instruments, the joyous sound of exaltation. While his proficiency was with the organ, when the bills for funds for Christmas or Easter were handed in, I’m sure he had hired cymbals, harp, lute and trumpets, - maybe a cithara, if he could find one. Our money was no object! It made for glorious sound and an interesting evening, trying to finesse the Finance Committee.

The Gospel is the account of a journey, a sharing of stories, a meal and the invitation to a new understanding of life. In outline, it captures McNeil. He would recount to us before dinner, each Saturday, stories of the various Cathedrals he had graced, with anecdotes that brought laughter. He had played in the capitals of the world, captivating audiences both with his skill and his personality – his understated humor and quixotic personality. He was truly an ecumenical organist: Park Avenue Synagogue, St. Mary the Virgin, a.k.a. “Smokey Mary,” the Park Avenue Christian Church and Holy Trinity. He had unyielding standards and would draw the line on “Here I Am Lord”, “On Eagle’s Wings”, and anything that needed guitar accompaniment. Most of the music of today’s Mass bears his DNA, except for that of Gabriel Faure and a cameo piece from Gregory the Great.

Death has not been a stranger to him. If every one of us has a tragic flaw, McNeil’s was a compulsion to cigarettes. We have all given him advice but we were fighting the determination that also drove him to such musical excellency. The last year has been difficult – a sense of expectation – his personal bellows shutting down - his talents held in bondage.

His achievements are well known to you and the world of classical musicians. You each have your own story and we can feed on “leftover” anecdotes for years. For Holy Trinity, he lifted an accomplished program to new heights. We had been blessed with his students and by a quirk of God’s intervention he has been with us for these last seven years – a gift to us. We present him back to the Lord.

The exaltation of St. Paul to the Philippians frames our final thought – some might think it symbolic but as teacher and task-master with the beauty of music as its goal – I think it describes our friend - “Whatever is true ....whatever is honorable...whatever is just...whatever is commendable...if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

It is to that God of peace that we commend our friend today. May God receive him with graciousness and joy. May the soul of McNeil Robinson rest in the fullness of eternal peace.

AMEN.

Msgr. Thomas P. Leonard

**CATHERINE AKS**

Former Singer, St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY

Interviewed: October 20, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

CA: 1968

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

CA: I sang with him in his professional church choir at Church of St. Mary the Virgin, NYC.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

CA: St. Mary the Virgin, NYC

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

CA: We sang EVERYTHING from the Machaud Mass up through recently composed works (of McNeil and others). Palestrina, Senfl, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Reinberger, Koday, Dvorak, Howells, many many more.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs?**

CA: McNeil liked a professional sound. He was not of the "straight tone" school.

**JAW: Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

CA: Maybe.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

CA: Not that I was aware of.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir?**

CA: I'm trying to remember: between 14-18, something like that. How were they chosen? Either by audition or Neil just knew of the person, or perhaps someone else recommended a singer. To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree) Mostly choral music/opera.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers?**

CA: Neil had VERY high standards. You were expected to be able to sight-read instantly, without making any mistakes. Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer? Neil was very generous to his solo singers, allowing them to "use their own voices".

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

CA: Neil could be contradictory: extremely intense, always wanting to serve the music, could be funny and playful at times. But...intolerant of mistakes in music making, and unforgiving once he decided that you just weren't up to the job (in his opinion).

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

CA: I can't say. His style evolved; lots of "French" influences in the earlier years, then less-so later.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

CA: Yes, this is true. I witnessed many occasions where Neil could be needlessly cruel. Once a singer got on his bad side, for whatever reasons, Neil could be brutal. I was fortunate in that I was sort of his "golden girl"....I could do no wrong!

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

CA: Neil gave me many wonderful solo opportunities for which I am grateful. He appreciated my artistry and made sure I was aware of his approval.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait? A man of mystery.**

CA: True. I can't say that I ever understood what made the man "tick", or what was actually happening in his private life. I'll share a bit of information that may or may not be true: when my daughter was born (in 1979), I very faintly recall Neil mentioning something about a son of his. How cute he was (or had been). Something to that effect. I didn't press him on it or ask any questions, because it was obvious that in his current life no such person was present. But....I remember thinking "How odd. A son that nobody knows. From a long time ago". Now, it's possible that he was referring to someone else's

son, or I may just have misunderstood what he was saying. Also....this was 37 years ago!  
But yes: he was certainly a "man of mystery"!

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

CA: I would add that some of my most memorable musical experience happened with Neil in my St. Mary days. We performed incredibly difficult music taken from the wealth of our music heritage, with top-notch professional singers. And...with a minimum of rehearsal; usually an hour or so before we had to perform. It was an exciting "flying by the seat of one's pants", so to speak. Exciting, high-level music-making.

**ELLIOTT Z. LEVINE**

Former Singer, St. Mary the Virgin and Park Avenue Synagogue, New York City, NY  
Interviewed: October 26, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

EL: 1972

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

EL: I was a singer at St. Mary the Virgin Church in NYC and McNeil was the organist. James Palsgrove was the Music Director

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

EL: When I first sang at St. Mary's the music choices were James Palsgrove's. When Neil became Music Director he included more early Baroque composers i.e. Cavalli. But the program at the church was high class Classical Anglican.

Years later when I sang at Park Avenue Synagogue, the music choices were probably Cantor Lefkowitz's. This also included many pieces of McNeil's.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

EL: I think McNeil strived for an "early music sound" without much vibrato and clear pitch in his choirs. I think this is what he heard in his choral repertoire. But he also liked singers who had sizeable and sometimes operatic, dramatic voices and who were good musicians. As long as there wasn't a wobble. It was useful to be able to deliver both.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

EL: McNeil often talked about voice teacher Beverly Johnson from Juilliard. I always assumed he played for some lessons and picked up vocal pointers. I don't know about formal lessons for himself.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)**

EL: At St. Mary's there were about 16. Park Avenue Synagogue had a quartet except for the High Holy Days or special concerts when there were about 16. I seem to remember a similar number at Park Avenue Christian where I would often sing Christmas Eve and other special events. I would say the majority of the professionals (there were some

volunteers at Park Ave Christian) were conservatory trained and could do any kind of choral work and step up to do an oratorio or opera solo.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

EL: I would say he would expect anyone to do both. This is a classic definition of a NY professional choral singer.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

EL: I think formal and intense are good descriptions. He could also be snappy, mean and pompous. Well.... he was Neil! But he had the goods. He was an elegant conductor who knew what he wanted. We all wanted to meet his demands. I learned early on to know my music and not to draw his ire. I saw what happened to people who did. Therefore, I had many rewarding years of musical experiences with him. He could also be very funny and enjoyed pranks and boyish behavior. (Ah- the timelessness of a good Gorilla mask!)

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

EL: I liked his motets and masses. I thought his temple solos were ravishing. I love his Ma Tovvu. I didn't get as much of a chance as others to do a lot of different church music. I would say that his style always had an elegant, French romantic flavor.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

EL: Absolutely. There were times I wanted him to calm down or leave the room and as I said two questions back I learned my lesson early to avoid his wrath. He always treated me very well and respectfully. That was very important to me and I appreciated it.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

EL: This is very true. He would be very exuberant in his praise of others talents and skills. He was always very kind and complimentary of my compositional work. This meant a lot to me. I think of him as a teacher. I would always pay attention to the way he would accompany every kind of music, whether it be a big complex piece or the simplest folk tune in temple. His harmonic and coloristic choices were always fascinating and a learning experience to me. I hope always retain that sense.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

EL: Well McNeil was a person who enjoyed the wide panoply of human experiences whether they be musical, interpersonal, sexual or psychedelic. I have lead a much more narrow spectrum of those experiences and can only guess at what Neil's were. But what I think is more important was that he really enjoyed life and sharing it with other people on so many levels. My life was greatly enriched by my contact with him and I really miss him.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

EL: In our lives there are the people whose effect is ever-present even if you don't think about it all the time. I think McNeil is one of those. I just was unpacking at my new home in Riverside Ca. and I have one of his Christmas Tree Ornaments. I will keep it very visible on a shelf in my office. His influence is always with me.



**JULIANNE BAIRD**

Former Singers, St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY  
Distinguished Professor of Music (Voice), Rutgers University  
Interviewed: November 16, 2016

I have enormous respect for McNeil for the frenetic pace that the choir worked under, for the outrageously difficult pieces that we sight read in a 45-minute rehearsal just before mass. He said many outrageous things to all of us. He once told me that he had killed someone, I never asked any details, it was a little scary but McNeil was known for jokes and pranks.

He was brilliant and controversial. We followed him like lambs, in interrupting a visiting minister on Christmas Eve and sang the credo right in the middle of the gentleman's homily. It was a terrific time to live in NYC. It seemed like everything in life was possible. We lived on Adrenalin, especially in the Smoky Mary choir. I think he was eventually fired for thumbing his nose at the clergy and cursing at the congregation.

**JUDITH MALAFRONTÉ**

Former Singer, St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY

Professor of Voice (Early Music), Yale University

Interviewed: October 13, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

JAM: 1976 when I moved to New York

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

JAM: Sang in the choir at St. Mary the Virgin 1976 - 1982. Often visited Neil and Chris at their home on 123rd(?) St in Manhattan. Visited them on Fire Island a few times (took a HELICOPTER once with Neil out there!). He was one of 2 organists at my wedding in 1985 and improvised on Dies Irae, which we all thought was hilarious.

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

JAM: At St. Mary the Virgin we sang everything from Josquin to Weber to Franck.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

JAM: He liked a vibrant, human sound. No wishy-washy colorless singing. He demanded a lot of sopranos (high notes, stamina).

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

JAM: I have no idea

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree).**

JAM: St Mary's (I sang there 1976 – 1982) had a number of folks in the Waverly Consort (I was one), we were often away on tour. In total there were 3 – 4 on a part, I think. There were only a few amateurish singers. Most of us were pretty high-level soloists.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

JAM: We had to sight-read and we didn't make mistakes. We might have to sing straight-tone for something early, or more lushly for something romantic. We were good at this. We never knew on a Sunday morning which it would be.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

JAM: He could be short-tempered and volatile. I loved him. He was witty and funny, but always serious about the music.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

JAM: I love his solo piece: "There is no rose." Hedi Klebl was always the soloist on Xmas Eve and she sang this to perfection. I also remember his beautiful "Improperium."

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JAM: I am glad he never got mad at me! We respected each other and recognized each other's strengths.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JAM: Very generous and kind. Gave freely of his time. Gave great advice. I learned a lot from him.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

JAM: No idea. He over-indulged his cats (roasted chicken, etc.) but I understand that now.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

JAM: He was a genius. If you operated on a high musical level (I guess I did), things were heavenly. I miss him and his unique outlook. I assume you are also writing about his improvisations, which were unbelievable and demonic.

**JAN OPALACH**

Former Singer, St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY

Associate Professor of Voice, Eastman School of Music

Interviewed: November 4, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

JO: Early 1980s

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

JO: I was a singer at St. Mary the Virgin; he was the organist/choirmaster.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

JO: St. Mary the Virgin, NYC

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

JO: Varied; French; English; American

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

JO: Full, clear vibrato.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

JO: No.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)**

JO: 10 professional singers; auditioned; mix of choral and opera singers.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

JO: High level of musicianship, in tune singing; good rhythm.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

JO: Intense; relaxed; demanding; and erratic.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

JO: See last remark.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JO: We had mutual respect for one another; accepted each other for our talent.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

JO: He was very supportive of me.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

JO: See last remark.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

JO: We all admired and respect him in spite of above mentioned traits and marveled at his musicianship and improvisation skills on the organ.

**NANCY WERTSCH**

Former Singer, St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY

Composer and Choral Contractor in NYC

Interviewed: November 15, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

NW: First contacted him in 1977 when I arrived in NYC. Cold called to find a position as a singer. 1983, called again and asked for a church job.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

NW: As a professional singer in NYC.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

NW: In the choir of St. Mary the Virgin.

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

NW: I don't recall individual pieces, but he loved the high service, it was practically Catholic. You could go through the entire service and not realize you weren't in a Catholic Church. Everything was in Latin. Mozart and Haydn masses. Lots of Chant! And the improvisations are what I remember the most!

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

NW: Neil loved big operatic voices, especially sopranos. He wasn't into the straight tone, which I was relieved about. Organists want their voices to sound like organ pipes and that wasn't Neil. He loved high voices. Somehow they blended, it wasn't like an opera chorus.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

NW: I think he had much more than other organists. I don't really know how he knew, but he certainly had an appreciation for real singing, that you don't find in most church jobs where organists are ignorant of working with the voice. When he would conduct, he had a feel for the breath and the phrase – very vocal. As a professional singer that was rare. I never felt restricted when singing for him.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)**

NW: Had to be professional, had to be able to read because he went through a lot of repertoire in a short time. If you didn't have talent you were gone.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

NW: See above.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

NW: The first twenty minutes were spent discussing what he had eaten and drank the night before; he would describe it in detail. Then we got down to the music. There wasn't a mid-week rehearsal, it was all done on Sunday morning, with no time to prepare in advance. Typically, we had time to go through it once. He had little patience for people who couldn't cut it.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

NW: I don't know, Chris, my husband, has been asking me if we sang his music the year I sang with him. I don't recall we sang much of his music that year. Maybe one piece, but most of them I didn't know. I do recall his Christmas Alleluia. I sang at St. Ignatius and would come across the street to sing for Neil at the earlier Christmas Eve Mass. When I sang at Temple Emanu-El, we did some of his music.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

NW: Oh yes! He had zero tolerance for anything less than excellence. One example is a trumpet player came in at Park Avenue Christian to play a wedding that I was singing he had trouble getting started, flubbed a couple of notes. Neil had no time for it and said OUT! The guy just grabbed his instrument and left as fast as he could. Sometimes Neil could be like two different people. He could be a sweetheart and then he could also be a bear. I never had any explanation. If you had gotten on the wrong side of him, it could be intense. Sometimes if you went to a restaurant with him you wanted to get under the table quick, he could be obnoxious with the waiter. Could be demanding and insulting.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

NW: He loved his students like Chris. He brought him here from Canada. He ensured they received financial support and that when they graduated he helped them get good jobs.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

NW: He would never talk about his childhood or family. He had two brothers, but he never spoke of them. Neil was the eldest son and whatever happened with the father, he probably got the most of it. He was from the deep south and he seemed to have prejudices, but not all the time. He didn't want you to know anything solid, that's why he was making things up and/or kidding all the time. He seemed to be trying to keep you away from really knowing anything about him.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

NW: He was a practical joker! On Easter, he would put on an Easter bunny mask and he would bob up and down over the balcony during the service. He would also like to scare people. The singers would go out from the balcony for the sermon and come back in the dark to sing the creed. This particular time, as the lights slowly came up, there was Neil in this awful mask, right in my face. It scared me and I let out this huge scream. He loved it – anything he could pull to surprise and shock you – he loved it.

He also showed up one morning outside my apartment building. He must have been just passing by. I was putting my kids in the car outside the building and I saw this threatening, sick looking person coming towards us. He had his coat up over his head and his arms were stretched out like a crazy person. I was hurrying to get my kids safely into the car expecting trouble but – it was Neil who suddenly unveiled himself and started laughing. There was never an end to his shenanigans.

Not long before Neil died, I wrote an organ piece for my husband Chris who played it at The Riverside Church on a recital. I titled it "Night Sky" and it describes in music the mysteries of the night sky and what is seen by gazing up at the stars. Neil heard it and said to me, "I really enjoyed this, Nancy. It transported me." For all his joking and carrying on, there was deep essence in the man that was unmistakable. That little complement meant more to me than almost any other I have ever received. I will always treasure it.



**ELAINE CUNNINGHAM**

Former Singer, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), New York City, NY  
Interviewed: November 9, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

EC: 1984

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

EC: I worked with Neil as a choral singer, as an organ-student and as a substitute organist for him at Park Avenue Christian Church. I counted him as a dear and beloved friend. I have always called him Neil.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

EC: Mainly Park Avenue Christian Church; A few times at Park Avenue Synagogue and at AGO functions; At Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church (all in Manhattan, NYC.)

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

EC: Mostly classical choral music—including early music, renaissance, and 20<sup>th</sup> century music, plus his own compositions. Composers included (not necessarily in alphabetical order or order of importance): Buxtehude, Brahms, Bach, Mozart, Carissimi, de la Rue, Dufay, Kodály, Haydn, Toulouse Mass, Victoria, Schutz, Pergolesi, Schuman, Shubert, Liszt, Handel, Mendelssohn, Britten, Fauré, Rutter, Bairstow, Darke, Bernstein, Stainer, Wertsch, etc., plus his own compositions. He wrote numerous chant melodies. He did not focus that much on the popular, gospel, or spiritual genres though he could perform/conduct them beautifully if asked to do so.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

EC: Neil's preference was for a beautiful and full sound, with a focus closer to straight tone than full vibrato, especially for sopranos. He wanted the choral sound to be on pitch and blended. He appreciated an operatically trained voice—and enjoyed immensely the lushness of a larger voice. He also appreciated the lighter boy soprano straight-tone sound. It's hard to say exactly what Neil heard when he wrote his choral repertoire—I always thought he heard the “angels” singing—with some rumblings from below. But he definitely aimed far above the stratosphere.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

EC: I do not remember him ever mentioning any formal training as a singer, though he worked with professionals who offered voice training and he could share knowledge gleaned from them with his singers. I think he was quite intuitive in getting the sound he wanted. He always asked for a “pretty” sound. He did not necessarily offer guidance or advice on how to do this technically—except in pronunciation, etc. He was able to bring that out of the members of the chorus through his conducting. He also trusted that the professional singer (or instrumentalist) would know what to do. Those not able to follow-through on their craft most likely would not be working with Neil again in a professional capacity.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)?**

EC: In the Park Avenue Christian Church Choir, there were usually 2 professional singers per section, usually described as “Section Leaders.” Neil was used to having a professional, fully paid choir which he had had at St. Mary the Virgin when he was there (prior to Park Avenue Christian Church), and which I thought was also the case at Park Avenue Synagogue. This was also true at Holy Trinity R.C. Church. Park Avenue Christian Church also included some volunteers from the congregation. Backgrounds were truly varied, covering all of those alluded to above—choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree. Neil would bring in extra professional singers at Park Avenue Christian Church for special holidays (Christmas and Easter), and used the same singers many times. He often contracted through choral contractors, Martin Doner and Nancy Wertsch (also a composer), who also sang with us for some of these special services. He also used singers he had known for a very long time, and whom he had worked with in the past.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

EC: Neil expected professionalism and excellence, with a goal towards perfection, no matter if it was a church service or a concert performance. He expected the volunteers to keep up and perform just as well. And, of course, those who were designated soloists were indeed expected to perform even more brilliantly. Neil would very quickly praise soloists and the choir for pieces well sung. It was easy to tell how he felt by the expression of pleasure or displeasure expressed on his countenance.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

EC: Neil in rehearsal could be described by all of the above words: formal, informal, intense, relaxed and comical, plus demanding. He felt rehearsals should be respected and was not pleased at any actions that might distract from them. He felt it important to express that displeasure—whether it was to congregants talking loudly in the sanctuary

while the choir was rehearsing, or choir members chatting amongst themselves during the rehearsal. He also felt this way during performances and services—and when playing the organ for a prelude or postlude. He was so concentrated on the music that any distraction would indeed be unappreciated. And he considered it disrespectful of the music being offered. At times in rehearsal, Neil loved to share anecdotes related to his world-wide concert travels, in particular related to cuisine he had eaten, as well as discussing foods he had cooked, and any wines he had found. He enjoyed sharing his feelings of the elegance of his experiences. He loved to share stories about various pets, in particular beloved dogs. This sharing served to relax him in many ways and also the members of the choir. Because of his high standards of performance requirements, I do believe this offered a means to temper some of the stresses involved before a performance.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

EC: Neil, not only as a composer but as a conductor and organist, offered me some of the most amazing musical highlights of my life. It would be hard for me to choose. I loved his Psalm Settings, several of which I don't believe are published as far as I know—in particular Psalm 23 and Psalm 137 plus his responsorial settings (“Alleluia”), and his setting of The Lord's Prayer (which I believe is in the Episcopal Hymnal's service music section). Other pieces that come to mind: Improperium (for all male voices—I loved listening to this piece); Christmas Alleluia; Mass for One Small Angel; Ave Maria, Christus Factus Est; Hosanna Filio David; Had I But Pinions; Spice She Brought; Jubilate Deo, Missa Brevis; Psalm 150, O Sacrum Convivium, Adon Alom, Ma Tovv. I appreciated so much his hymn tune settings and his organ pieces (Chorale Preludes on Douglass and Llanfair). There are many more I could list which I have not remembered. Aside from the choral music, his superlative organ playing—especially his improvisations—must not go unmentioned. He was indeed a world-renowned organ improvisationalist, and Park Avenue Christian Church's congregation was the beneficiary of countless performances of preludes and postludes—none of which were ever recorded. That is regrettable.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

EC: Indeed, Neil did manifest mercurial behavior, which often caused much dismay in his interpersonal and professional relationships. His response to situations could often be hard to predict, and many times it would make one wish to be cautious in interacting with him. He was a human being who perhaps was born with a thinner epidermis than most of the rest of us—thus his ultra-sensitivity in responding to stimulus, whether it be the beauty of music or the perceived difficulty of another person's actions. Being a male Pisces probably didn't help. He was not afraid to experience and express his feelings to the fullest.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to those traits?**

EC: Neil and his wife, Cristina, hosted numerous lavish holiday and summer choir parties at their home. As Neil was also a very private person, I don't feel I can comment knowledgeably on his more personal actions of generosity. However, I observed his dedication as a teacher and his full sharing of his musical gifts with his students. He enjoyed entertaining and fine dining and often treated friends to these fine experiences. He reached out to friends at holidays and special occasions. He played for memorial services and weddings of friends and choir members without expectation of remuneration. He was a loyal friend—and expected loyalty in return and was deeply dismayed if he felt any disloyalty occurred.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

EC: Indeed, Neil was a very private person. He did not share many details of his life. And those details he did share were received with respect for his wish for privacy and kept in confidence.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

EC: In discussion with a mutual friend also interviewed for this project, we noticed that you omitted asking about Neil's relationship with church or synagogue congregations in general. His talent was recognized and appreciated by all. However, his creative process may not have always allowed him to be embraced fully by all members though many deeply loved him. Indeed, he did not suffer those he felt "fools," gladly. And he had difficulty with those in supervisory capacities whom he felt incompetent, disingenuous and whom he did not respect. He understood the politics of administrations, especially those within religious or educational school settings. Neil's life path proffered no wishy-washy response to him personally. His passion, his quest for perfection, and his depth of soul were difficult sometimes to encounter and understand. I am deeply, deeply grateful to have known him, and to have had him for my friend and musical guide.

**MYRNA PAYNE**

Former Singer, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), New York City, NY  
Interviewed: November 9, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

MP: February, 1984

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

MP: I knew Neil as organist and choir director of the church I attended (Park Avenue Christian Church, 1010 Park Ave., New York, NY). I began singing in this choir when I moved to New York in 1981, and am still singing in it today. When the organist and choir director left to take a job at another church, Neil was invited to be our organist and choir director, beginning 2-26-84. He left this position 7-15-07. I considered Neil a friend. He was generous and hospitable –invited the choir to his home for parties. He enjoyed good food and drink, and seemed to enjoy socializing with us.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

MP: Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1010 Park Ave., New York, NY

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

MP: Always classical - Buxtehude, Mozart, Brahms, Schumann, Schubert, Liszt, Handel, etc., with some early music (Pergolesi, Carissimi, Pierre de la rue, Byrd, the Toulouse Mass, Victoria, Schütz, Fux), 20th-century compositions (Britten, Fauré, Duruflé, Rutter, Bernstein, Stainer), including a lot of his own compositions.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

MP: He wanted the sound to be full and beautiful. Depending on the composition, straight tone was needed. Good blend and intonation.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

MP: I know nothing about his own training, but I know he was acquainted with those who trained singers. He would quote several of them from time to time during rehearsal. My favorite was someone (Beverly Johnson?), who would say, "Give me a prettys."

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree).**

MP: We had at least two paid/professional singers on each part. We were fortunate to have an additional three or four volunteer altos, two or three volunteer sopranos, one or two volunteer basses. There never seemed to be a volunteer tenor. I believe Neil had an all-professional choir at St. Mary the Virgin (his church position immediately prior to his work with us). So having a room full of volunteers must have made more work for him. On special occasions (Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday, Easter), Neil would pull in several more paid/professional singers. They were often seasoned professionals from other choirs in the city (Musica Sacra, Western Wind, for example). Our every-Sunday paid singers were students from Mannes or Juilliard. Some were graduates of music schools and were voice teachers whose students would show up as volunteers. Our Christmas Eve service was early, so Neil could get incredible singers from other churches (St. Thomas, St. Ignatius, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Cathedral of St. John the Divine) and choral groups who would sing with us, and then go to their usual paid church job for midnight mass. Neil knew all these singers, and hand-picked them. He had long-term relationships with opera singers, and other professional singers, and they would be asked to help us with difficult solos. A special favorite of Neil as well as the choir was Gwen Jones.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

MP: Neil expected everyone to blend, and be able to read music, especially sight-read. We called the paid people "section leaders," and they were expected to help the volunteers in their section, and sing the solos needed in their part.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

MP: Neil's demeanor would depend on a) how he felt when he got out of bed that morning, b) whether he had gotten upset with someone or something, c) whether the choir was sufficiently grasping the music, or singing it the way he wanted in the timeframe required, d) whether it was a big, important service, such as Christmas Eve, e) whether we had encountered rehearsal interruptions. Basically, he was strictly business when it came to rehearsal, so I would term that "formal" and "intense." He could be relaxed and comical as well, usually after the service ended, and at relaxed social gatherings.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

MP: Neil's responsorial **Psalm settings** are exquisite (and unpublished, unfortunately), and are my absolute favorite of his compositions. I especially love his setting of:

- Psalm 42, As the deer longs for the water brooks;
  - Psalm 23
  - Psalm 137 By the waters of Babylon.
  - Psalm 149 - An unusual setting - one that is snappy and festive, which ends with how the people were happy in their beds.
- Other extraordinary compositions include:
- Christus Factus Est
  - Hosanna Filio David
  - Improperium
  - A Mass for One Small Angel
  - Had I but Pinions
  - setting of The Lord's Prayer
  - acclamation sung before and after the Gospel reading
  - setting of Ave Maria
  - Spice She Brought and Sweet Perfume
  - Christmas Alleluia
  - numerous hymn tunes

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

MP: I dreaded Christmas Eve because Neil would usually be in a tense, difficult mood. But I grew up with that - my dad was like that, so I just tolerated it. I didn't think of Neil as being opinionated - he knew what he wanted, and he wanted the best. His mood could indeed change abruptly if something happened that irritated him. He could not abide anyone talking during rehearsal, especially anyone who might be in the sanctuary while the choir was rehearsing in the choir loft. He didn't like to be interrupted during rehearsal. I remember when someone came into the choir room while we were rehearsing (to ask a question or make an announcement), and Neil was not happy to be interrupted - couldn't they wait until after rehearsal? He also did not appreciate any talking anywhere while he was playing the organ. He was probably the best organist in the world when it came to improvisation, and he couldn't tolerate a loss of concentration due to some blabber mouth within his earshot. We in the choir knew not to move a muscle during the postlude (which was often an improvisation). Bottom line: He was human. We all have our flaws.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

MP: Absolutely! In fact, this is how I remember him. Every year he and Cristina would open their home to the choir in winter and summer for a big party. He loved good food and drink, and Cristina is an excellent cook. He also provided incredible organ performances at memorial services for parents of some of our choir members. The first

Christmas he was at PACC, he brought in all those opera singers and big guns to sing our Christmas Eve service with our choir. I was upset because we were given no warning, and why was I of all people singing with such a prestigious group of high-powered singers?! I put on my coat to leave and told him he certainly didn't need me if he has this army of singers, but he insisted he needed my voice because it was of a certain quality, and begged me to stay. Very charming, and he won me over, even if it was all lies. (ha) And even when he was near death and could hardly stand, he insisted on cooking a beautiful and delicious lunch for Elaine Cunningham and me. I treasure that memory.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

MP: Neil was private, and unique. His lifestyle was different from the norm. His private life was none of my business.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn't ask?**

MP: What was Neil's relationship with the congregation in general? He was dearly loved by those who appreciated his talents.

-- He was asked to lead a class on church history through the ages, and how the mass and various aspects of worship came into being.

-- Two PACC members, Jack Anderson, a poet, and James Teschner, an artist, collaborated with Neil to create one of PACC's most moving and successful Lenten events (Stations of the Cross): Jack would read one of his poems, then Neil would perform an organ improvisation to enhance/illustrate the poem, while one of Jim's paintings was highlighted in the darkened sanctuary.

--On April 8, 2003, members of PACC, with the help of many supporters, put together a festive "Ruby Jubilee Concert" and "Champagne Musicale" to celebrate and honor Neil's 40 years of composition and performance in New York City.



**ESTELLA PATE**

Former Singer, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), New York City, NY  
Interviewed: November 5, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

EP: When he first applied for the position at Park Avenue Christian Church – can't remember the year

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

EP: In addition to singing in his choir, Neil and I were close friends, he was also my mentor in that he made it possible for my harp to be shipped from Arizona to NYC and then paid for lessons.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

EP: Park Avenue Christian Church

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

EP: Classical, traditional church music.

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

EP: He strove for a light, non-vibrato sound especially for the sopranos. Very Medieval-Renaissance sound. Yes, I think this is the sound he wrote for.

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

EP: I don't recall him ever mentioning this. I think he just knew the sound he wanted and he knew how to get it.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)**

EP: There were from 8 to 12; they had varying degrees but were all professional singers. The women, for the most part, had operatic background, 1 or 2 altos were musical theatre/cabaret, the men all sang in choirs throughout the city. All of the professional singers had to audition and 99% were recommended by either other choir directors or a professional service he used.

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

EP: The solo singers were all part of the choir and he expected perfection, timeliness, and strict attention from both the soloists and the choir.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

EP: He was all of those things – it depended on his mood and how the chorus was doing.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

EP: I don't remember all of the titles but his "Pinion" song was exquisite; the pieces he composed for Christmas were incredible; I honestly liked everything he wrote.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

EP: It was OK as long as you weren't the object of his opinion and didn't cause his mood to change. He was very intolerant of noises (talking) in the sanctuary when we were rehearsing. Or when he was playing. I remember him stopping in the middle of one postlude after a service because the folks in the line to speak to the pastor were talking too loud. The first time I accompanied the choir on the harp I was exceptionally nervous and really screwed up. I have to admit there were tears – mine.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

EP: As I mentioned before, he enabled me to bring my harp to NYC and paid for my lessons. When my Dad died, he pulled together the choir for the memorial service and was there to talk whenever I needed someone. In fact after Dad passed, I stayed a couple of days with him and Christine at their home. When I started working on my Ph.D. in musicology at NYU he helped pay for my books. He was a good friend.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

EP: In general, he was very closed-mouthed about his background and family history; on the other hand he loved to talk about famous people he knew and his experiences with them.

**GEORGA OSBORNE**

Former Singer, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), New York City, NY  
Interviewed: October 27, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil Robinson?**

GO: 1997

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil? Briefly describe your relationship with McNeil.**

GO: First as a substitute professional singer in the church choir, then as a permanent paid member of the choir.

**JAW: In what parish/synagogue did you sing for McNeil?**

GO: Park Avenue Christian Church.

**JAW: In the parish/synagogue you sang, what would you say was McNeil's regular choice of choral repertoire?**

GO: I'd say it was a mix of early music and 20<sup>th</sup> century music. Ena Freeman and I sang a lot of chant, some old and some he had written. We sang parts of a mass in every service – even though we were a protestant church!

**JAW: What type of choral sound did McNeil strive for in his choirs? Do you think this is what he heard when he wrote his choral repertoire?**

GO: We did a lot of straight tone singing, but many pieces called for a big full choral sound. I think it depended on the piece. The singers he hired all had big voices and he was always working to "reel us in".

**JAW: To your knowledge, did McNeil have any formal training as a singer?**

GO: I don't know. I don't think so... I think he just picked up techniques along the way. Listened when he accompanied, paid attention.

**JAW: How many professional singers would typically sing in his church choir? How were they chosen? To your knowledge, what were their backgrounds (choral, musical theatre, opera, non-degree)**

GO: At PACC, there were at least 6 to 8 paid singers for every service. More for special occasions. I think he took us on through Martin Doner, who was the "Church Agent". We had auditioned for Martin and when choir directors needed subs, they'd call Martin and he'd fill the spot. I think Neil would "audition" us during the rehearsal/service. If he liked

us, we'd be invited back. Most were trained in opera, some in choral and musical theater. Some of us were trained in all types of singing. (Yours truly, included.)

**JAW: What expectations did McNeil have of his singers? Were there different expectations from the chorus than the solo singer?**

GO: I think the expectations were the same for ALL singers. He expected us to read well. He expected us to be able to listen and blend, to have good diction, know how to pronounce the language in which we were singing and to behave as professionals. He'd GUSH over some of the soloists and, conversely, not lavish many compliments upon the choir. If we did not perform up to his expectations, he would not say a word, nor make eye-contact.

**JAW: What was McNeil like in a rehearsal? (Formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical.)**

GO: Depending on the day/service/mood, he could be any of those (formal, informal, intense, relaxed, or comical). If there were new or unknown singers with us, he was a bit more formal. When it was an easy (to him) service, he'd be a bit more relaxed. Sometimes he would be incredibly ornery and silly. He'd break into some jazz riff or show tune... or tell an off-color joke. He was sometimes almost child-like in his glee when something came together quickly and beautifully. OR, depending on his mood, if somebody angered him, be it a singer or perhaps the minister, or a congregant, he could be mean and angry. But, the main thing was that he expected us to learn quickly – he didn't seem to want to rehearse much. He wanted us to pull our professional weight and come in, read the piece(s), do a little work here and there, then run it in the sanctuary before the service and perform it during the service. No mid-week rehearsal. Just show up Sunday morning.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

GO: Psalm 150; Had I But Pinions; Service music – my favorite Responses, Psalm 37 and Psalm 37.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

GO: Yes, McNeil had his "moments" – one never knew how temperamental he might be. I alluded to this previously. He had very strong opinions on how a service should be run, about how professional singers should behave, about how *congregations should behave!*

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

GO: He loved to entertain and would have choir parties after the holidays and after the “end of the choir year”/beginning of summer. He invited favorite singers to come back to sing songs he’d written that he particularly liked their voices in. He gushed over singers like Melanie Sonnenberg, Neil Farrell – and another singer, a woman whose name I can’t remember. He came to my cabaret act and brought several choir members with him and he picked up the tab for the group.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

GO: I suppose one could call him a “man of mystery.” I think he was a man who had secrets. He sometime spoke in a cryptic manner.

**JAW: Is there anything you would like to add that I didn’t ask?**

GO: Neil loved to play pranks – once I was out at an upscale Indian restaurant in Midtown with some office co-workers (I was a temp at the time) and the waiter brought me a “provocative” note, about kissing my toes, written on a napkin. I blushed as I read it and thought it so odd and random... I tried to look around the room surreptitiously, and after a few moments, I spied Neil sitting alone at a table across the room, giggling, so delighted with himself at his prank! He was the last person I expected to see, since my experience with him was on the Upper East Side and not Midtown. He teased me about that for years! I would also mention that I don’t feel that Neil was a particularly religious man, but he was a great artist and could compose music to elicit emotions and feelings of great spirituality. He set the bar extremely high for any of the following choir masters at PACC. Neil was forced to resign. It was such a shame that his departure was handled so poorly. And, Neil was furious about it!)

**PHILIP BRUNELLE**

Artistic Director & Founder, VocalEssence,  
International Choral and Opera Conductor  
Interviewed: November 2, 2016

**JAW: In what year did you meet McNeil?**

PB: It was in the 1970s through a mutual friend in New York while McNeil was organist at St. Mary the Virgin.

**JAW: In what capacity did you know McNeil?**

PB: As a friend, then I invited him to perform an organ recital at Plymouth Church in Minneapolis, then I got to know his music. In 1980 when I compiled the AGO Organ Anthology (Oxford University Press) I invited McNeil to be one of the composers included.

**JAW: A few years back, you published an article in the American Guild of Organist on McNeil's published choral repertoire. What is your knowledge of his choral output?**

PB: The various pieces that I mentioned to you in an earlier email.

**JAW: Andrew Yeargin's dissertation categories his music into three phases. Do you agree with these classifications or would you categorize them differently?**

**Phase I – Post-Neoclassic, influenced by Stravinsky.**

**Phase II – Serialism.**

**Phase III – Conservative/Hyper-Romantic.**

PB: That sounds correct.

**JAW: In your opinion, what makes McNeil's music different than other 20<sup>th</sup> century composers of the same time?**

PB: McNeil was interested in stretching musical boundaries, so his style changed from piece to piece. Of course, he loved the French repertoire so that influenced him greatly and his improvisations captured that style. He was also a fantastic performer of Dupré's music.

**JAW: To your knowledge, what do you personally consider to be the highlights of McNeil's career as a choral composer? Is there a piece or two of music that you feel expresses or summarizes McNeil's compositional style?**

PB: It is hard to speak of 'highlights' as he combined his playing, his teaching and his composing as all part of his musical life.

**JAW: Having programmed and performed his repertoire more than anyone else, in your opinion, with regard to his choral music, what are the greatest challenges for the choir, the soloists, the conductor, and the organist?**

PB: McNeil was so very talented and he expected performers to have his level of talent! Vocal range is large and if he knew of a specific person he would write for that strength (such as the soprano solo in his *Messe Solennelle*). His organ pieces (in the AGO Anthology) are not for the faint-hearted! But, of course, McNeil could play them flawlessly. He could also write the simple, eloquent melody (as in *Spice She Brought*) that is well within the level of many church choirs.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was very opinionated, quick to change moods and behavior, and sometimes could be difficult to tolerate. What is your experience related to these traits?**

PB: This is absolutely true. McNeil did not suffer fools easily – he would tell them off, and this in turn gave him a negative reputation in some circles. I always got along very well with him, but I know that this was not true of everyone. It led to disagreements with employers and other musicians.

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil could be loyal, supportive, kind, and at times very generous. What is your experience related to these traits?**

PB: This is also very true. If he was your friend – he WAS your friend. I remember fondly his visit to Minneapolis to play a recital at Plymouth Church on the occasion of my daughter's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was not aware of that, but when we were at dinner and this was told to him he leapt up from the table, found the waiter, and returned to the table with a bottle of Dom Perignon to celebrate the occasion! At that recital I asked him to close with an improvisation and gave him 3 contrasting themes – by Dominick Argento, Libby Larsen and Eric Stokes. At the conclusion of the concert he flamboyantly walked offstage and exclaimed: “OH! Once I had developed all three themes I wondered what I should do....and then thought – a double fugue with chorale”. That was quintessential McNeil!

**JAW: It has been noted that McNeil was a man of mystery. What is your experience related to this trait?**

PB: I'm sure that is also true, though I knew him from a distance of miles for the most part. I was not involved in his personal life.



What the Clergy and Congregations  
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## CHORAL OLD AND NEW

*This month I would like to focus on the music of McNeil Robinson, an extraordinary musician—organist, teacher, improviser, and composer.*

**SPICE SHE BROUGHT AND SWEET PERFUME** (Presser 312-41437), SATB, soprano solo, and organ. This is the first choral piece of Neil's that I performed, about 25 years ago. After a delicate little organ Renaissance dance-like procession, the choir (SAB) sings the words of John Newton ("Mary to her Savior's tomb hastened at the early dawn")—a charming canon between men and women followed by an organ interlude. Then the women ask the question, "Where has my Savior gone?" The final section ("Alleluia, He is risen") begins quietly, then bursts into a fortissimo Alleluia. The end is like the opening, but now the organ is in A major. This is a wonderful introduction to Neil's music and is not difficult.

**MESSE SOLENNELLE** (Presser 312-41424), SATB, soprano solo, French horn, and organ. This is a grand setting in the French style that evokes shades of Poulenc and Dupré. It is a celebratory setting demanding a high soprano soloist and a professional horn player. The theme of the Kyrie returns to close the Agnus Dei, a gentle motif that contrasts with the more operatic Gloria and Sanctus/Benedictus. Wonderful for a festival service.

**PSALM 150** (Peters 68153), SATB and organ. If you are looking for a new setting of Psalm 150 with a marvelous organ part, this is a fine one that almost feels like a high-church hoo-down! The choral parts are of medium difficulty and fun to sing. This is definitely a setting that the choir and congregation will find both spirited and spiritual.

**MISSA BREVIS** (Peters 68154), SATB and organ. Here is Neil at his sumptuous best. Each movement of the Mass captures the text in a way that is musically meaningful. The soaring Kyrie has a gorgeous melody and wonderful part writing—like singing the Durufle Kyrie. The Sanctus has a carillon-like sparkle for treble voices, and the Agnus Dei concludes with a celestial move to B major for "Dona nobis pacem" that makes a perfect ending to this marvelous piece.

*McNeil Robinson is an amazing organist and, though this is a choral column, I want to mention his organ compositions, so that you are aware of them:*

**CHORALE PRELUDE ON "LLANFAIR"** (Peters 68203)

**CHORALE PRELUDE ON "DOUGLAS"** (Peters 68202)

**SONATA 1990** (Peters 68152) (commissioned for the 1990 AGO National Convention in Boston)

**HOMMAGE À MESSIAEN** (Presser)

**DISMAS VARIATIONS** (Presser)

*And look at Neil's dazzling pedal etudes in the AGO Anthology 1988.*

PHILIP BRUNELLE

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Figure 2.2 Brunelle Article in the The American Organist



**WAYNE LEUPOLD**

President, Wayne Leupold Editions, Foundation, and Archives

Interview: December 19, 2016

**JAW: Did you know McNeil Robinson personally? If so, briefly describe when you first met, in what context did you met, and anything you would like to tell about your professional relationship?**

WL: I knew him only casually. He came to Syracuse NY once in the 1970s; played a recital for the Syracuse AGO chapter; and had dinner in our home. In the 2000s he regularly came to our display booth at the national AGO conventions.

**JAW: Please tell me about the Leupold Archives, specifically its purpose and mission.**

WL: The Leupold Archives is a division of The Leupold Foundation whose mission is the preservation, reproduction, and dissemination of the culture of the pipe organ.

**JAW: Does the Leupold Archive have an online presence? Are the different collections in the archive listed online?**

WL: The Leupold Archives is online with a page in <[www.wayneleupold.com](http://www.wayneleupold.com)> The collections are not yet listed online. Cataloging is currently ongoing to ultimately place the collections on line.

**JAW: In what other manner is the archive publicized so that researchers like myself will have knowledge of its contents?**

WL: 1. Articles in journals (e.g. Sept. 2013 issue of The American Organist); 2. News releases when additional large collections are acquired (e.g. the Ernest White gift, in spring 2016 issues of The American Organist and The Diapason); 3. Our website [www.wayneleupold.com](http://www.wayneleupold.com)

**JAW: How does one visit the archive? Is an appointment required?**

WL: By appointment.

**JAW: How did the Robinson Estate come about choosing the Leupold Archive versus giving his collection to Manhattan School of Music or the archives of the American Guild of Organist.**

WL: I refer you to Chris Creaghan to answer this question. It should be pointed out that The Leupold Archives already, has the largest collection of organ music of any library, public or private, in the country except for the Library of Congress.

**JAW: What items of the Robinson Estate are housed in the Leupold Archive?**

WL: Organ music, organ manuscripts, choral music, choral manuscripts, and memorabilia (correspondence, photos, concert programs, etc.)

**JAW: How does Robinson's non-organ materials, specifically his choral compositions fit into an archive predominately established for "all things organ?"**

WL: No they do not. The choral compositions were allowed to be included in the gift because the gift contained so much significant organ music and books dealing with the organ and organ literature. The donor wanted the entire collection to stay in one location. We had to take it all or nothing.

**JAW: What are the benefits for someone, like the Robinson Estate, giving their collection to the Leupold Archives?**

WL: The benefits include the mission of The Leupold Foundation (see above). Also we will give gifts a new carefully preserved home in perpetuity.

**JAW: Has the Estate given any special instructions with regard to the handling of the collection?**

WL: Yes. There are significant donor restrictions.

**JAW: Is there any additional information regarding the Robinson Collection or the Leupold Archive that you wish to have published in my document for those who might be further interested in Robinson's collection?**

WL: Contact information: [contact@wayneleupold.com](mailto:contact@wayneleupold.com)

## CHAPTER 3

### ROBINSON AS CHORAL MUSICIAN

While Robinson did not hold a degree in choral conducting and most likely did not formally study choral literature, his knowledge of the literature is evident in the repertoire he selected for use in churches he served as director of music and organist in New York City. In Chapter Two, “Conversations on McNeil Robinson,” former students and former choir members made note of Robinson’s extensive use of repertoire from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. This chapter examines in brief the key musicians employed at churches in New York City upon Robinson’s arrival, the choral music programmed at each church and the synagogue where he was employed, his desired choral sound, his knowledge of the voice, the expectations he had of choral singers, and his rehearsal process.

From the early twentieth century, many churches in New York City have been known for their rich musical heritage. Before Robinson came to New York as a student, many well-known and respected musicians served as directors of music and organists in several churches in New York City. These musicians began, created, and/or furthered the foundation of excellence that many of these institutions celebrate today. These musicians include William Self and Gerre Hancock at St. Thomas Fifth Avenue; Larry King at Trinity Church Wall Street; an array of artists-in-residence at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine; Jack Ossewaard and Harold Friedell at St. Bartholomew’s Church;

Clarence Dickinson at The Brick Church, and Virgil Fox at The Riverside Church. This would later include Robinson himself, who served St. Mary the Virgin (1964-1982); The Church of the Holy Family at the United Nations (1967-1978), The Trinity Institute (1970-1976), Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ (1984-2007), Holy Trinity Catholic Church (2007-2013), and Park Avenue Synagogue (1966-2013).



Figure 3.1 Interior, St. Mary the Virgin, NYC, NY

Kyle Babin's dissertation, and later book, on the *History of the Music Program at St. Mary the Virgin in New York City* contains the most documented account of Robinson's choice of sacred choral repertoire for any church where he was employed.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately for Robinson, a choir member at St. Mary the Virgin, Nancy Sartin was a musicologist,

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<sup>11</sup> Babin, Kyle. "Music at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, New York City (1868-Present) and its Importance in the History of Sacred and Secular Music." DMA diss., The Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY, 2008, 213-229.

and aided Robinson in his early choices of choral repertoire. Both were known to spend hours in Columbia University's library looking through choral music in the collected works.<sup>12</sup>

In the first year of his tenure, 1974, at St. Mary the Virgin, the choral music lists showed programmed choral works by John Rutter, Philip James, Hebert Murrill, Christopher Tye, and Michael Tippett. These works are often considered by Episcopal musicians as a typical diet of choral literature for a competent church choir in the Episcopal Church. The following year, 1975, the repertoire changed significantly to include early choral works by composers like Miguel Sanchez, Kenneth Corneille, Ludwig Senfl, Heinrich Issac, Pietro Francesco Cavalli, and Gaspar von Weerbecke.<sup>13</sup>

Much of the repertoire selected for the choir of St. Mary the Virgin was from the Medieval and Renaissance periods. A significant amount of the music could be considered unique and historically overlooked choral works that are rarely performed. The choir at St. Mary the Virgin was professional, with no fewer than eighteen singers, that were capable of performing difficult works. Robinson carefully selected talented singers who had a flair for early music, including Julianna Baird, professor of voice at Rutgers University and Judith Malafronte, professor of early music voice at Yale University.

In addition to music of the Medieval and Renaissance periods, Robinson included choral repertoire of the early Baroque. Robinson was deeply interested in the performance practices of early music, which stemmed from the "Early Music Movement" in the mid-twentieth century. The movement sparked an interest in the performance of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 217.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 216-217.

music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Performers aimed to recreate the sound and the performance practice of the period. In his book *The Early Music Revival* (1989), Harry Haskell identifies what can be known about the performance practices of early music. Other musicologists like Richard Taruskin sparked controversy in the 1980s by his arguments against trying to recreate the sounds the composers might have heard.<sup>14</sup> In an interview with Andrew Adams (2003), Robinson was asked about how the changes in “Early Music” affected church music in the city. Robinson responded, “In the late 1960s, some of us were going around ornamenting Bach and playing at outrageous tempos, thinking we were observing correct performance practice. I found out years later that I was dead wrong. I [Robinson] conducted New York’s first Baroque orchestra at the Church of the Holy Family in Alessandro Scarlatti’s *La Giuditta*. We also did some then-unknown Mozart: the *Grabmusik*, and we also premiered the Isaac Posch psalms for an Easter Vigil at Holy Family. For 1968, that was pretty way out. It also had an enormous effect on choral sound.”<sup>15</sup>

During his tenure at St. Mary the Virgin he arranged premieres and revivals of early music composers including an array of European composers: Charpentier, Delalande, Cavalli, Pergolesi, Carissimi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Giorgi, Casati, and Gaffurio. He also performed Spanish Baroque music, composers included Joan Cererols (*Missa a Cinco Vozes 4º Tono*) and Miguel Lopez (*Missa a Onze*). Other early music performances included Adam von Fulda, Guillaume Dufay, Clément Jannequin,

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<sup>14</sup> Burkholder, J. Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014, 305.

<sup>15</sup> Adams, Andrew. “Celebrating 40 Years: An Interview with Organist/Composer McNeil Robinson.” Vocal Area Network. 2003. Accessed October 1, 2016. <http://www.van.org/articles/McNeilRobinsoninterview20030313.htm>, 2-3.

Alexander Agricola, Jacob Obrecht, Nicolas Gombert, and Gilles Binchois.<sup>16</sup> Figure 3.2 is a music publication from St. Mary the Virgin that provides a listing of the music for notable services during the 1977-78 season.

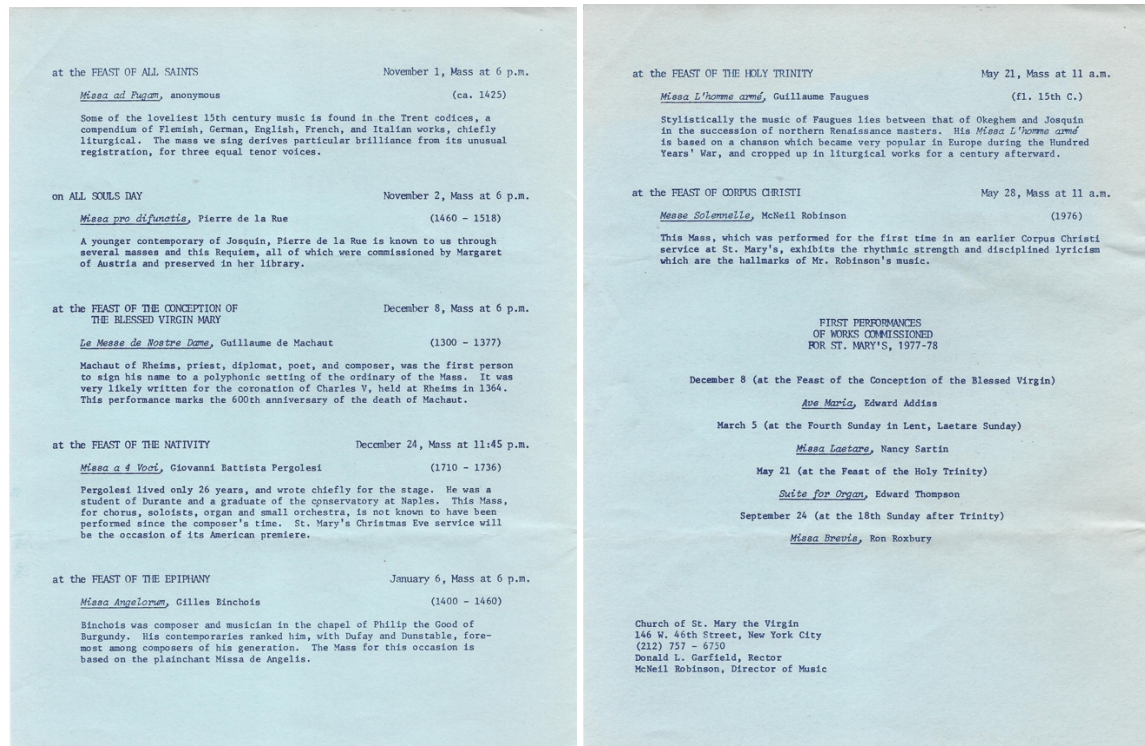


Figure 3.2, Music at St. Mary the Virgin, Notable Services 1977-78 Season

Robinson was equally well-versed in music of contemporary composers. He gave world premieres of his own music and the works of Graham Farrell (*De profundis*, 1976), Nancy Sartin (*Missa Macaroni*, 1976 and *Missa Laetare*, 1977), Ron Roxbury (*Ave verum corpus*, 1977) and *Missa brevis*, 1979), Edward Addiss (*Missa brevis*, 1979), Edward Thompson (*O sacrum convivium*, 1979), Vladimir Ussachevsky (*Missa brevis*, 1979) and Charles Morrow (*Dum medium*, 1981). Samuel Barber at his death was writing a Mass for the choir of St. Mary's. Contemporary composers, outside of

<sup>16</sup> Babin, Kyle. "Music at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin," 221.

commissions, were also performed including the works of Darius Milhaud, Vincent Persichetti (*Mass*, 1960), and Aaron Copland (*Four Motets*, 1921). Samuel Barber, John Browning, Albert Fuller, and Alfred Mann were frequent parishioners of St. Mary the Virgin and were extremely supportive of Robinson's work.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 3.3 is a letter from Aaron Copland to Robinson regarding his choir's performance of his *Four Motets* (1921) at St. Mary the Virgin. The motets were written while a student of Boulanger.<sup>18</sup> The texts are from the Old Testament. There is no evidence that this composition was recorded by Robinson.

Figure 3.4 is a letter from Vincent Persichetti to Robinson regarding his choir's performance of his *Mass* (1960). The mass is characterized by two-part choral writing and chant-like themes that are sometimes metered or a-metric (no particular organization).<sup>19</sup> Robinson, having studied with Persichetti, uses some of these characteristics in his own compositions, which are discussed in Chapter 5.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 285-286.

<sup>18</sup> Strimple, Nick. *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century*. Portland: Amadeus Press, 2002, 223.

<sup>19</sup> Alwes, Chester L. *A History of Western Choral Music*. Vol. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 311-312.



AARON COPLAND

1538 L. WASHINGTON STREET PEEKSKILL, N. Y. 10566

June 8, 1979

Dear Neil:

Thanks so much for sending the tape of the performance you gave of my FOUR MOTETS on May 13th. I thought you and the chorus did a beautiful 'job'.

Naturally I was pleased to know that you are planning to include the MOTETS in your next year's recording program. You certainly have my blessings, but I suggest that it is only proper to alert my publishers, Boosey & Hawkes, since they are the eventual part-owners of the publishing rights. You might address your letter to Mr. Stuart Pope, who is head of the New York office.

Thanks again for bringing these old pieces of mine to life!

Sincerely,

Mr. McNeil Robinson II  
Saint Mary the Virgin  
New York, N.Y.

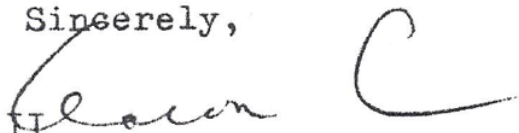
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Aaron C', written in dark ink.

Figure 3.3 Letter to Robinson from Aaron Copland

THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL  
PETER MENNIN, PRESIDENT  
LINCOLN CENTER, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10023

November 10, 1980

Mr. McNeil Robinson  
549 West 123rd Street  
New York, New York 10027

Dear Neil:

Your performance of my Mass, last Sunday, warmed my heart. The content of the music was projected as the phrases were shaped meaningfully and sensitively. I was delighted to learn that you plan to record the work with your magnificent Church of Saint Mary the Virgin choir. Your performance on records will be the definitive interpretation of one of my favorite works.

With warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Vincent", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vincent Persichetti

Figure 3.4, Letter to Robinson from Vincent Persichetti



Figure 3.5 Interior, Church of the Holy Family, NYC, NY

From 1967-1978, Robinson was director of music and organist at Church of the Holy Family at the United Nations and from 1970-1976, director of music at Trinity Institute, part of Trinity Church on Wall Street. These positions were held during his tenure at St. Mary the Virgin.

There is no official documentation of the choral music Robinson used at The Church of the Holy Family. It has been noted that the church was highly visible, with services being aired on NBC and CBS radio. In 1968 Robinson composed a choral work, *Hodie Christus Natus est* and a vocal solo, *Carol of the Rose*, for the Haas family for the CBS Christmas Broadcast. Christopher Babcock suspected that Robinson used music that he knew from working under James Palsgrove, who was director of music at St. Mary the Virgin where Robinson was organist. Babcock indicates that the professional choir was instated in 1989 while he was director. He further notes that the choral library

was built mostly by those who followed Robinson.<sup>20</sup> Paul Murray, a former student of Robinson and another previous director of music and organist of Holy Family from 2002-2013, conveyed that the choral library was rather extensive and the church continued to employ a professional octet during his tenure.<sup>21</sup> It was both Babcock's and Murray's speculation that the music at Holy Family was not the music of St. Mary the Virgin, but music appropriate for Vatican II. The music was in the vernacular, less use of Latin texts, with more use of folk mass settings and song-like hymnody versus Renaissance polyphony. Robinson most likely used some of his own compositions. At Holy Family, Robinson started the first Baroque orchestra in New York called the Hammerskjöld Orchestra, named after Dag Hammerskjöld the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. The ensemble was the resident ensemble for Holy Family. As mentioned earlier, Robinson conducted the orchestra in a recording of Alessandro Scarlatti's *La Giuiditta*, produced on the Music Heritage Society label.

Robinson served as director of music for Trinity Institute from 1970-1976. The institute is part of Trinity Church Wall Street. Trinity Institute is an annual conference to help clergy and lay persons think theologically about the important topics of the days and to explore classical theology faithfully in light of new developments in science and culture. The annual conference is sponsored by Trinity Church Wall Street in NYC. At the publication of this document the Institute is in its 46<sup>th</sup> year. The conference presents emerging and inclusive theological and social perspectives and engages participants in inquiry, dialogue, and reflection. The conference welcomed participants from all faith

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<sup>20</sup> Babcock, Christopher chrisbabcock@aol.com. RE: Music at Holy Family [Email to Jason Wright jasonaw@email.sc.edu]. 16 December 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Murray, Paul. Interview by author, 14 October 2016, Columbia, SC.

perspectives. The conference begins with a worship service on Thursday evening and concludes with worship on Sunday morning. Robinson would have been responsible for the music at these services. As with Holy Family, there is no documentation of the choral music used. In looking at Robinson's compositional catalogue, there are two lost Missa brevis masses that were composed in 1971 and 1972 for the conference.



Figure 3.6 Interior, Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), NYC, NY

Following Robinson's appointment at St. Mary the Virgin, he was appointed director of music and organist at Park Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a position he held from 1984-2007. During his tenure, Robinson oversaw a program of high quality music of primarily classical repertoire, including early music from the



Renaissance to the twentieth century and many of his own compositions. Composers included Bernstein, Buxtehude, Brahms, Britten, Carissimi, Darke, de la Rue, Dufay, Faure, Handel, Haydn, Kodaly, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Pergolesi, Rutter, Schuman, Schutz, Schubert, Stainer, Victoria, and Wertsch. It is interesting to note that Robinson instituted the use of a choral mass setting at their principal worship service. It is not the custom for the Disciples of Christ denomination to employ liturgical music such as chant and a choral mass setting during the service. It was more customary to have a modest anthem, with more attention given to congregational hymnody.

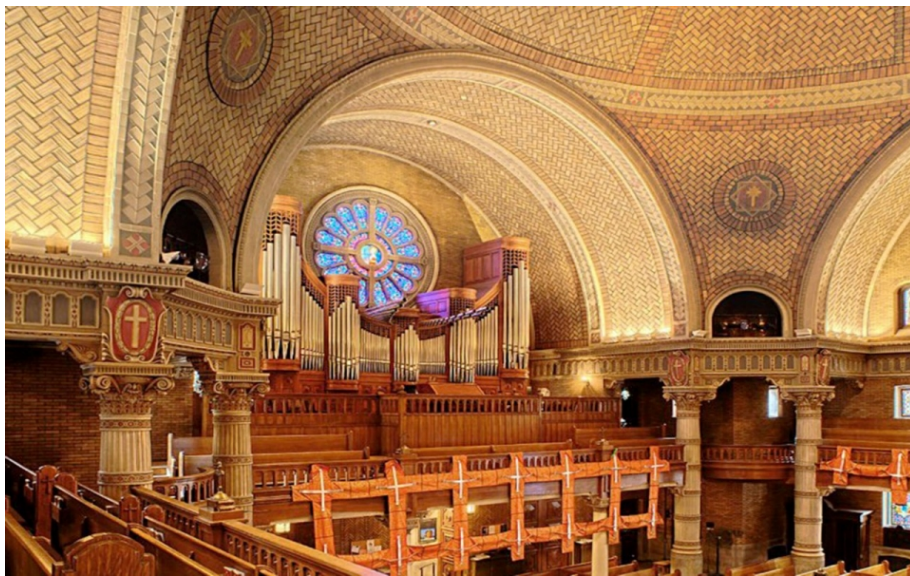


Figure 3.7 Interior, Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, NYC, NY

Robinson semi-retired in 2007, but accepted the call of Monsignor Thomas Leonard to assume the position of director of music at Holy Trinity Catholic Church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. As Yeargin states, “It was at Holy Trinity that Robinson groomed his final generation of organ students...” Robinson, already in

declining health, relied heavily on the assistance of his students to manage the music program at Holy Trinity. When I asked what mark he felt Robinson left on the music program at Holy Trinity, Yeargin said, “He certainly added to the prestige of a church that has had a long history of excellence in choral music...something unique among the overwhelming majority of Catholic churches in the world. He helped to remind the organ community of New York that one of its greatest instruments (and rooms) is right there on the Upper West Side.”<sup>22</sup> The church has a live acoustic environment with an organ by Orgue Létourneau Ltée (1997).



Figure 3.8 Interior, Park Avenue Synagogue, NYC, NY

Park Avenue Synagogue, a synagogue of the Conservative Jewish Tradition in Manhattan has a long-standing tradition of excellence in musical arts. Over the years,

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<sup>22</sup> Yeargin, Andrew. Interview by author, 29 October 2016, Columbia, SC.

before and during Robinson's tenure, dozens of successful composers received Putterman Commissions<sup>23</sup> and had their music presented at those annual services. The roster includes, among many others, such names as Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Weill, Darius Milhaud, Herman Berlinski, Stefan Wolpe, Alexandre Tansman, Robert Starer, Jack Gottlieb, Lazar Weiner, Yehudi Wyner, Miriam Gideon, Marvin David Levy, Leo Smit, Lukas Foss, Jacob Druckman, Leo Sowerby, and David Diamond. (See Appendix D). Of equal interest from a historical perspective is the list of many of America's most prized composers who were invited by Putterman but who, for one reason or another, declined: Arnold Schoenberg (who did seriously contemplate the proposition), Samuel Barber, Ernest Bloch, Paul Hindemith, Paul Creston, Walter Piston, Norman Dello Joio, Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Bernard Hermann, William Schuman, and Igor Stravinsky—to cite only some.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note that synagogues and temples of the Conservative Jewish tradition did not employ the use of music instruments, including the organ. It is customary to have all music sung without accompaniment. Typically, the Cantor would be joined by a quartet of vocalists, with the exception of a High Holy Day, when a large ensemble of singers would be employed. At Park Avenue Synagogue, Robinson worked with Cantors David Putterman, David Lefkowitz, and Azi Schwartz, all of whom have international reputations. Robinson wrote many compositions for the synagogue, which

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<sup>23</sup> Shortly after his [David Lefkowitz] at Park Avenue Synagogue in the fall of 1976, Cantor Lefkowitz met with the leaders of the congregation to develop plans for an annual Shabbat morning service of classical liturgical music. More than 30 years earlier, his predecessor, Hazzan David Putterman had instituted an annual Shabbat evening service of specially commissioned contemporary music which grew into a highly regarded, prestigious event in the world of synagogue music. Cantor Lefkowitz' intention was to introduce a morning service which would serve as a complement to the already established evening service and, equally important, stand in its own right as a means of giving new life to music composed many decades earlier.

<sup>24</sup> Levin, Neil W. "Liner Notes." Milken Archive. June 1, 2001. Accessed March 18, 2017. <http://www.milkenarchive.org/music/volumes/view/masterworks-of-prayer/work/shir-lerev-shabbat/>.



will be discussed in Chapter 6. Many of these compositions were written specifically for their cantor's voice types.<sup>25</sup>

A conductor's choirs are often identifiable by their sound. In interviewing former members of Robinson's choirs, singers commented that Robinson choice of sound depended upon the music they were singing. For early works, he desired the tone to be blended, free and not overly straight, with clarity, characteristic of early music practices. "I don't want to say we imitate boys, because women's voices have more color. It is straight, but not white. I can't stand white sound. Straight-tone helps with tuning, in general."<sup>26</sup> For other repertoire, he desired the choir to sing with a vibrant, human sound. He definitely did not want a wide vibrato. There were times that he preferred singers who had a sizeable and sometimes operatic voice. "Having been so involved with the nineteenth century as a pianist, sometimes I just wanted to hear a more voluptuous sound."<sup>27</sup> Two former choir members of the choir of St. Mary the Virgin noted that in general, "He specifically admired full voiced sopranos, who had a high range and lots of stamina."<sup>28</sup>

Robinson had a long relationship with soprano Beverly Peck Johnson and her voice studio at Juilliard. His collegial relationship with her influenced how he interacted with singers. "I certainly did learn what singers could do and what singers shouldn't do! She [Beverly Johnson] taught me the value of treating the chorus the right way: keep them focused, don't tire them...you have to have superbly trained singers in order to get a beautiful straight, senza vibrato sound. They have to know how to support." He was

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<sup>25</sup> Lefkowitz, David. Interview by author, 16 December 2016, Columbia, SC.

<sup>26</sup> Adams, Andrew. "Celebrating 40 Years: An Interview with Organist/Composer McNeil Robinson," 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Malafronte, Judith. Interview by author, 13 October 2016, Columbia, SC.

fortunate to have worked with professional vocalists who were knowledgeable of vocal pedagogy and could glean knowledge from them. Many of his singers now hold faculty teaching positions as voice professors at well-respected institutions. As Elaine Cunningham states, “I think he was quite intuitive in getting the sound he wanted.”<sup>29</sup> He did not offer technical advice for achieving the sound, rather he described what he wanted. He was a stickler for accuracy of pitch, diction, and rhythm. He fully expected the professional singers in his choirs to be well-prepared and have the ability to sight-read a service and if not, they would quickly be dismissed. He had the same expectations of volunteers who sang in the choir at Park Avenue. Robinson had a professional choir at St. Mary the Virgin and Holy Trinity Catholic Church of approximately 12-18 professional singers. At Park Avenue Christian, his choir comprised of 25-30 singers, mostly amateur singers with a professional octet. He offered praise to singers who sang well; if he was displeased, he had no qualm in sharing that displeasure.

During rehearsal Robinson could be formal, informal, intense, relaxed, comical, and demanding. He believed rehearsal should be purposeful; it was the business of the evening to rehearse and prepare for the upcoming service or concert, and he had zero tolerance for anything otherwise. He felt that it would be gravely disrespectful to the music for there to be interruptions of any kind. There were also times when he was known to be comical and silly. According to Nancy Wersch, most rehearsals began with a discussion of his travels or the cuisine he had eaten and the wine he consumed. He loved food and wine, as well as his pets.<sup>30</sup>

Robinson’s exposure and performance of a vast array of musical style and genres

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<sup>29</sup> Cunningham, Elaine. Interview by author, 9 November 2016, Columbia, SC.

<sup>30</sup> Wertsch, Nancy. Interview by author, 15 November 2016, Colfax, NC

from many continents, coupled with his ability to achieve his desire sound, and perform works at a high level of quality influenced his own compositional style, to what extent only Robinson himself knew.

## CHAPTER 4

### ROBINSON'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

#### **Style and Genres**

Known for writing in a variety of styles and genres, Robinson's works can best be described as ranging from conservative to progressive, simple to difficult, tonal to serial, liturgical to music for the concert stage. Robinson's vast *oeuvre* is predominately choral. These compositions include anthems, Evening Service settings (Magnificat and Nunc dimittis), mass settings, including Missa brevis settings, hymns, and psalm responsorials and service music. His other compositions are mentioned in Chapter One.

#### **Composition Influences**

Robinson's composition teachers include Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987), Virgil Thomson (1896-1989), and Yehudi Wyner (b. 1929). Robinson states that his music does not sound like any one of his teachers.<sup>31</sup> In examining his music, elements from each teacher's compositional style can be found in his music. He was also influenced by the compositions of Stravinsky, Messiaen, Duruflé and the serial works of Webern.

Robinson was aware of Allen Forte's book *The Structure of Atonal Music* (1973) and Charles Wuorinen's book *Simple Composition* (1979/1994) and used them with his

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<sup>31</sup> Adams, Andrew. "Celebrating 40 Years: An Interview with Organist/Composer McNeil Robinson," 2.

students. In Andrew Yeargin's interview, Yeargin states, "Robinson regarded Wuorinen very highly. He used Wuorinen's text *Simple Composition* extensively with improvisation and composition students. He always took great care to introduce Wuorinen's sacred choral works in his Choral Repertoire classes [at Manhattan School of Music]. He had a lot of respect for and interest in Wuorinen's work."<sup>32</sup>

In 1947, Vincent Persichetti joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, assuming chairmanship of the Composition Department in 1963. It was at Juilliard that Robinson studied with Persichetti (1965-1970). Persichetti's early style influences, like Robinson, were Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith, and Copland, before he [Persichetti] developed his distinct voice in the 1950s. He used polytonality and pandiatonicism in his writing, and his music could be marked by sharp rhythmic interjections. His embracing of diverse strands of musical thought makes characterizing his body of work difficult. Persichetti was credited with having produced a distinctive blend of Classical, Romantic, and Modernist elements. Robinson's music is greatly influenced by Persichetti's style in both harmony, rhythm, and style.

Virgil Thomson utilized a musical style marked by sharp wit and overt playfulness. He composed in almost every genre of music, producing a highly original body of work rooted in American speech rhythms and hymnbook harmony. Though mostly diatonic, some of his work was densely chromatic and even 12-tone in organization. In an interview with Andrew Adams, Robinson makes note of studying counterpoint with Thomson.<sup>33</sup> Thomson's influence can be seen in Robinson's use of counterpoint and chromatism.

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<sup>32</sup> Yeargin, Andrew. Interview by author, 29 October 2016, Columbia, SC

<sup>33</sup> Adams, Andrew. "Celebrating 40 Years: An Interview with Organist/Composer McNeil Robinson," 2.

Yehudi Wyner is a graduate of Yale, Harvard, and Juilliard. In his music, Wyner often seeks to reconcile disparate elements of past and present. Classical, chromatic and serial elements coexist together with notable ingredients of popular and melodic and gestural inflections from his Jewish heritage. The result is an eclectic but personal style, poetic and lyrical. Wyner's influence is seen in Robinson's Phase 4 pieces that combine various elements of style.

Stravinsky, Messiaen, Duruflé, and Webern influenced Robinson's compositions. Stravinsky was known for his Neo-classical styles (1920-1954) and his experimentation with serialism (1954-1968). In an interview with Vocal Arts Network, Robinson said that when he composed the *Messe Solennelle*, he had Stravinsky in his head at all times. Robinson noted that he could imitate Messiaen well, but he tried not to do so. Robinson, like Messiaen was interested in combining Neo-Classical and Romantic styles, with allusions to serialism. Duruflé influenced Robinson's use of harmony. Webern's influence can be seen in Robinson's organ composition, which is not discussed in this document.

Andrew Yeargin draws additional parallels between Robinson's music and that of Hindemith and Poulenc. Yeargin compares Hindemith's contrapuntal texture with the textures used in his composition *Spice She Brought and Sweet Perfume* (1981). Similarly, he compares Robinson's use of harmony, with increasing chromaticism in *Missa in die Tribulationis* (1980) to the compositional styles of Poulenc, where chromaticism grows out of a tonal landscape and then lessens as the piece closes.

## Commissions

McNeil Robinson wrote the majority of his choral compositions for churches and the synagogue that he served as director of music and organist and several commissions for houses of worship across the United States, mainly in the east coast region of the country.

Robinson received several prestigious choral commissions over his lifetime from academic institutions, professional choral ensembles, and individuals for special events including La Salle Military Academy (*Messe Militaire/Festival Choral Eucharist*, 1983), The Hackley School (*Salutation, Dance and Nocturne*, 1968), American Guild of Organists National Convention (1988) (*Missa Brevis*, 1996), the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Michael Ramsey, (*Ecce Sacerdos*, 1967), the Haas Family for CBS Christmas Broadcast (*Hodie Christus Natus est*, 1968), and Music Sacra (*Messe Solennelle*, 1987).

## Text

In a 1985 interview with Louis Weingarden on Jewish Music, Robinson said, “You can’t write a text if you aren’t absorbed in it!”<sup>34</sup> Robinson strongly felt that in order to properly set the text to music, one had to digest the text and its meaning. The texts of his choral music, psalm settings, and hymns come from both the Old and New Testaments, the Psalms, from the ordinaries and propers of the Mass.

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<sup>34</sup> Robinson, McNeil. “Interview with Louis Weingarden.”

## **Form**

The majority of Robinson's choral compositions are through-composed. The texts for these compositions do not repeat. This method of composition allows for the text to be set in a continuous manner without repeating music. In other instances, he chooses to set the music in an ABA format, especially for pieces that are sectional such as the Kyrie and Angus Dei sections of the mass, or have a repeating text.

## **Choral Ensemble**

As previously discussed, many of Robinson's choirs throughout his career were either professional or semi-professional. Robinson's compositions were written with these singers in mind. He was very demanding of sopranos; there are compositions that require the soprano to sing in a high tessitura. For soprano solo lines, the tessitura could even be higher (ex. *Had I But Pinions* 1982, the soprano is asked to sing B5 & C6 *pp* to imitate the flight into heaven). Sopranos need to have dexterity and the ability to sing in a virtuosic manner. At times he would apply the same high range to the first tenors, particularly in compositions for male voices only. In general, the alto and bass lines are always within the standard range. The majority of his compositions are composed for SATB mixed-chorus or TTBB men's chorus.

## **Accompaniment**

As an organist, Robinson wrote choral pieces with organ accompaniment or a cappella choir. Robinson himself played every piece that he composed. Christopher Creaghan remarks that the accompaniments to his choral works are generally difficult.



However, if one does score analysis and marks the score accordingly, sharing the inner voices between the hands or moving a voice into the pedal, they are manageable.<sup>35</sup> A few of his compositions, such as the *Missa Brevis* (1996) contain organ registrations and others do not.

The accompaniments and the choral parts are to be treated as equal forces. This is a common characteristic of English church music – the accompaniment and the choral parts are one voice, not two. Robinson, working in an Anglo-Catholic parish would have been keenly aware of this practice.

When registering Robinson's pieces for organ, it might be helpful to know what style of organ and type of tonal palette was heard from the organ for which it was composed. It is also important to take into consideration the acoustical environments, which will be addressed in the next section.

The organ at St. Mary the Virgin was an Aeolian-Skinner (1942) with a lush and rich tonal palette. The organ was extremely present in the room. This space and instrument, per Christopher Creaghan, influenced Robinson's compositions the most.<sup>36</sup> The American Classic Turner organ (1996) presently at The Church of the Holy Family was not yet installed during Robinson's tenure. Robinson would have been familiar with the Delaware Organ (1965), which was a neo-Baroque instrument. Holtkamp (1982) built a neo-Baroque instrument for Park Avenue Christian Church. Robinson on more than one occasion made tonal revisions to warm up the sound. The organ at Holy Trinity was Létourneau (1997) and was tonally designed to excel in both French Symphonic and German Baroque organ literature. Park Avenue Synagogue had a large custom electronic

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<sup>35</sup> Creaghan, Christopher. Interview by author, 23 November 2016, Columbia, SC.

<sup>36</sup> Creaghan, Christopher [chris.creaghan@verizon.net](mailto:chris.creaghan@verizon.net). RE: Organs in NYC [Email to Jason Wright [jasonaw@email.sc.edu](mailto:jasonaw@email.sc.edu)]. 6 January 2017.

Allen (unknown installation date), which Robinson himself designed. This instrument replaced their former organ, a Casavant Frères (1926). To view the specifications of these organs, please visit <http://www.nycago.org/organs/nyc/>.

### **Acoustical Environments**

The acoustical environment of churches in many of New York City's houses of worship are superb for both organ and choral performances. Robinson was indeed fortunate to have worked in these environments. The three Christian churches where he was employed, St. Mary the Virgin, Church of the Holy Family, and Holy Trinity, due to hard surfaces and high ceilings, had above-average to extremely live acoustics. Park Avenue Christian Church had a dryer acoustic, due to the Guastavino tiles that were added to the ceiling. In the Christian Churches that Robinson served, both the organ and choir were positioned in the back of the nave, which projected the sound down the main axis of the building. Park Avenue Synagogue had a dryer acoustic. The organ was located behind a screen.

Creaghan suggested when programming Robinson's works, it is important to make considerations regarding tempo, accents, and other musical devices that are affected by acoustical treatments. These pieces, having been born out of lively acoustics, would be performed with slight modifications in rooms that have a drier acoustic. Regardless of the room, it is important that the piece not be performed too slowly or with too much sentimentality. The over use of rubato would not be appropriate, but rather a more metronomic approach with some flexibility, with good phrase direction.

## Compositional Process

In conversation with American organist Stephen Tharp at an American Guild of Organist Chapter event in New York City (September 8, 1985), Robinson explained his compositional process.<sup>37</sup> Stravinsky's Neo-classical period (1920-1954) had a great influence on Robinson's approach. Stravinsky said that in a piece everything has to be indigenous to that piece, everything must fit into a box and the box must be small.<sup>38</sup> Robinson goes on to add, "Do not add things that do not relate to the music, chicken soup cans or the kitchen sink, or God who knows what else!"<sup>39</sup> Robinson started with an idea and then saw how many legitimate ways that small idea can work. He then starts transmuting the idea. Robinson referred to Charles Wuorinen's influence of not allowing the piece to get away from what it is. Important to Robinson is the need to work on every section simultaneously. He did not believe one could get cohesion in a piece if one did not work on everything simultaneously. After the composition is finished, then go back and make revisions. A final stage of the compositional process is having postpartum depression. He always felt empty when the piece was finished, mainly because he had given his all in writing the composition.

## Compositional Phases

Robinson's music can be described harmonically as tonal, even when the style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was atonal, experimental, and at times extremely dissonant. His music is

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<sup>37</sup> Robinson, McNeil. "Interview with Stephen Tharp." The New York American Guild of Organist Chapter. *YouTube* audiovisual recording. Recorded 2014, posted 2014 by jameskennerley. <https://youtu.be/KdUrtK9GxC0>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

firmly grounded in the French Romantic language of the nineteenth and twentieth century, where unexpected harmonies arise out of a tonal landscape.

At times Robinson's music reflected his own personal periods of interests and areas of study. Robinson claimed to have studied serialism; it is unknown with whom. He also knew Forte's set theory well. These compositional aspects are reserved for his organ compositions. It is only in his organ improvisations that one can see an adventurous harmonic language and where one would experience Robinson at his finest.

Robinson's works can be divided into four compositional phases: Neoclassical, serial, conservative/tonal, and blended. Robinson himself referred to some of his pieces falling into these categories. It was Andrew Yeargin, who for the first time, fleshed out these phases.<sup>40</sup> Creaghan concurs with the various phases in Robinson's compositional style, but cautioned against placing all of Robinson's compositions on a timeline or into a category.<sup>41</sup> Creaghan has spent countless hours with Robinson's compositions and feels that Robinson would not have separated his pieces into categories. Robinson referred to him, "as his scribe."<sup>42</sup>

**Phase I – post-Neoclassical.** Neoclassicism in music was a popular twentieth century compositional trend where composers desired to return to classical ideals, characterized by order, balance, clarity, and emotional restraint. Neoclassicism was a reaction against Romanticism. Emphasis was placed on rhythm and contrapuntal textures, expanded tonal harmony, and a focus on absolute music versus program music of the Romantic period. There were two camps of Neo-classical influence, the French, influenced primarily by Satie and Stravinsky, and the German with Hindemith. Nadia

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<sup>40</sup> Yeargin, 21-27.

<sup>41</sup> Creaghan, Christopher. Interview by author, 23 November 2016, Columbia, SC.

<sup>42</sup> Robinson, McNeil. "Interview with Stephen Tharp."

Boulanger was the teacher of several noted composers that were in Robinson's circle, including Aaron Copland, Ned Rorem, and Virgil Thomson. Her teachings sought to extend her understanding of Stravinsky's compositional ideals. As Robinson notes, he was greatly inspired and influenced by Stravinsky and many who followed him.

Robinson's post-Neo-classical compositions display the use of progressive harmony, in what can be referred to as twenty-first century tonality. Compositions are written in a clear and balanced form, likening them to the Classical era. The *Jubilate Deo* is an excellent example of this phase. Harmonically, he uses the additive note, where a chord contains an added 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 13<sup>th</sup>, here an added 2<sup>nd</sup> as shown in Figure 4.1.

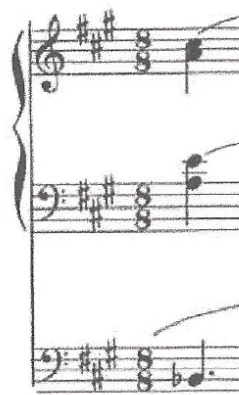


Figure 4.1 *Jubilate Deo*, m. 16

The use of chromaticism creates an alternation of diminished chords housed between tonic and dominant chords shown in Figure 4.2. This style is rooted in music of the late nineteenth century, which can be analyzed using Neo-Riemannian theory operations of triadic transformation.

There are six types of triad transformation. The first three are parallel (P), leading-tone (L), and relative (R), where one voice moves by semitone. In parallel

transformation, the chord transforms from major to minor (i.e. C major to C minor). In leading-tone transformation, the third of a major triad become the root of a minor triad, and vice versa (i.e. C major to E minor). In relative transformation, the root of a major triad becomes the third of a minor triad and vice versa (i.e. C major to A minor). The second set parallel prime (P'), leading-tone prime (L'), and relative prime (R'), involves two voices moving by semitone. In parallel prime, major and minor triads share the same root (i.e. C major to C-sharp major). The root of a major triad becomes the fifth of a minor triad (and vice versa) in leading-tone prime (i.e. C major to F minor). For relative prime, the fifth of a major triad becomes the root of a minor triad and vice versa (i.e. C major to G minor). These operations, made it easy for Robinson to quickly move around harmonically, yet remain in the context of one key.<sup>43</sup>



Figure 4.2 Jubilate Deo, m. 14

Robinson creates symmetry in the music by dividing the octave by the tri-tone. This can be seen in the Jubilate Deo when the pedal part, a third voice, is added against the treble and bass accompaniments. The pedal part creates extreme dissonance and instability in the choral parts as shown in Figure 4.3.

<sup>43</sup> Straus, Joseph N. *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*. 4 ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016, 188-189.



Figure 4.3 Jubilate Deo, mms. 14-15

Another feature of music of this period is the use of modes, Robinson employees the use of modality in some of his compositions, Psalm 150 (Figure 4.4) is an example.

$\text{♩} = 80$   
 $(\text{♩} = \text{♩})$   
 $f$   
 Praise Him with strings and pipe, Praise Him with  
 Praise Him with strings and pipe, Praise Him with  
 Praise Him with strings and pipe, Praise Him with  
 $f$   
 $mf$

Figure 4.4 Psalm 150, mms. 54-57

Published compositions that are representative of Phase I – Neo-classical include *Messe Solennelle* (1980/1981), *Spice She Brought and Sweet Perfume* (1981/1984), *In the Chill of Bleak Midwinter (Ave Verum)* (1971/1979), *Infant Redeemer (Ave Maria)* (1976/1979), *Terra Tremuit* (1978/1979), *Christmas Alleluias* (1979/1980), *Jubilate Deo* (1980/1987), and *Psalm 150* (1998). Compositions that are more aligned to Francis Poulenc and Sir Lennox Berkeley are *Missa in die Tribulationis* (1980/1982) and *Christus factus est* (1976). These compositions are tonal with the use of increasing chromaticism and reflecting limited emotion, characteristics of neoclassicism.

**Phase II – Serial.** Serial compositions use a fixed series of notes. This technique orders pitches in a row, and these generate melodies, harmonies, structural processes, and variations within a composition. Pitch content can be manipulated by prime, retrograde, inversion, and retrograde-inversion. Robinson would have known of the works of Charles Wuorinen, Aaron Copland, Olivier Messiaen, and Ned Rorem, all of whom used this technique.

Robinson did not employ this technique in his choral music, but reserved it for his opera and organ compositions. Compositions that are representative of this Phase include *Scene from Medea: An Opera in Progress* (1979). The first published serial work was his *Dismas Variations* (1980/1982). The work was commissioned by Kenneth Starr and dedicated to Vincent Persichetti. This work is based on two four-note sets, identified in Allen Forte's catalogue as 4\_Z15 and 4\_Z29.<sup>44</sup> A second example, *Angels: Variations for Organ and Orchestra*, was seven variations using total serialism, a technique that determined duration, dynamics, and register, in addition to pitch. Robinson uses a mirror-image hexachord melodically.

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<sup>44</sup> Thurman, 46.



**Phase III – Conservative.** Robinson used this phase of writing in his choral music, hymns, the majority of his Jewish and solo vocal music, as well as in some of his organ compositions. Compositions in this phase are tonal, with slight use of chromaticism (flare of Neo-Romanticism) and highly-structured form. Published works that are representative of Phase III include: *Music for the Lord's Supper* (1969/1979) and *Messe Militaire* (Festival Choral Eucharist) (1983/1988).

Of special note is his composition *Had I But Pinions*. This composition stands alone as the most strikingly different piece of Robinson output. Andrew Yeargin describes it as, “luxurious wave of sound and orchestral color created by the ensemble of organ, horn and harp coupled with the extremes of tessitura assigned to the solo soprano (Figure 4.5) and surfeit of emotion outpouring from the chorus perfectly paint the image of one’s soul flying on the wing of a dove.”<sup>45</sup> The composition was written for a friend of Robinson’s who had been ill and was not expected to live. Fortunately he made a full recovery. This composition is a caricature of Neo-Romantic flavor.

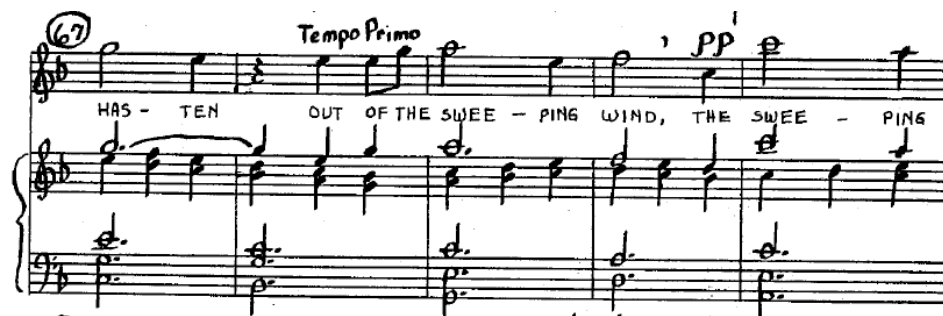


Figure 4.5 *Had I But Pinions*, mms. 67-71

**Phase IV – Blended.** Robinson’s blended compositions show characteristics of both Neo-classic and conservative styles. The *Missa Brevis* (1996) is a fine presentative

<sup>45</sup> Yeargin, 26.

of this Phase. Robinson combines elements of his Neoclassical style by way of form, harmonic language, and rhythm. The conservative side of this work is seen in its formal structure and its use in the liturgical service.

The Kyrie has a contrapuntal accompaniment, reminiscent of the late Baroque and early Classical periods as shown in Figure 4.6.



Figure 4.6 Missa Brevis (1996) Kyrie, mms. 1-8

Robinson uses several themes throughout the composition. The choral parts in the Kyrie (Figure 4.7) sets up the primary theme, which later returns in the Sanctus.



Figure 4.7 Missa Brevis (1996) Kyrie, mms. 1-8

In the Gloria, Robinson uses a rhythmic motive, which becomes a cyclical theme throughout the work as shown in Figure 4.8. The horn is representative of horns honking in the streets and the left hand, of the movement of subway cars underneath the streets, of NYC.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Bohl, John. Interview by author, 12 January 2017, Washington, DC.



Figure 4.8 Missa Brevis (1996) Gloria, mms. 1-2

In the Sanctus, Figure 4.9, Robinson makes use of ostinato and carillon.

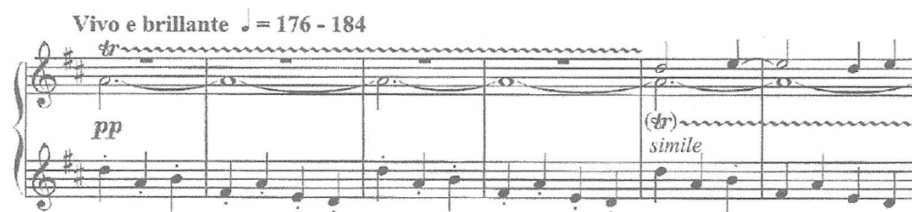


Figure 4.9 Missa Brevis (1996) Sanctus, mms 1-6

A return of horn fanfare motive from Gloria reappears in the Sanctus in augmentation seen in Figure 4.10.



Figure 4.10 Missa Brevis (1996) Sanctus, mms. 37-39

The secondary theme, found in the Benedictus of the Sanctus, is used in the Agnus Dei shown in Figure 4.11.

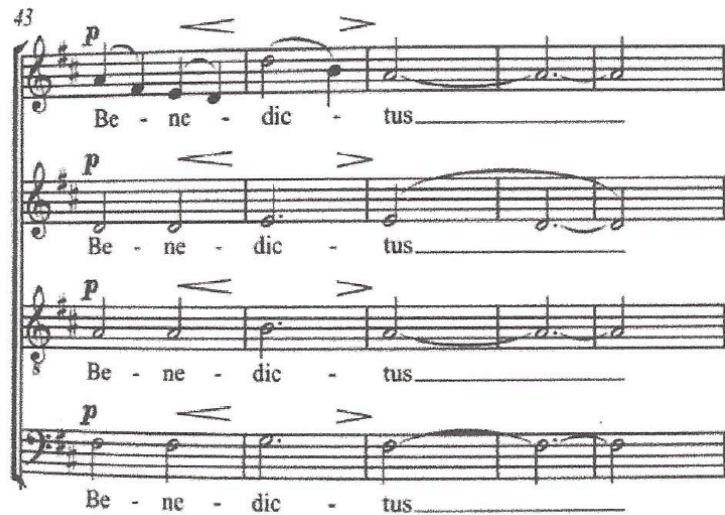


Figure 4.11 Missa Brevis (1996) Sanctus mms 43-47

The Agnus Dei opens with the primary theme of the Benedictus in diminution in the organ part in Figure 4.12.



Figure 4.12 Missa Brevis (1996) Agnus Dei, mms. 1-2

The primary theme from the Kyrie is altered and disguised in the Agnus Dei as shown in Figure 4.13.

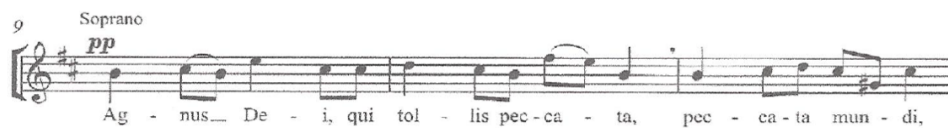


Figure 4.13 Missa Brevis (1996) Agnus Dei, mms. 9-12

The horn fanfare motive from the Gloria and Sanctus returns in the last 3 measures in augmentation shown in Figure 4.14.



Figure 4.14 Missa Brevis (1996) Agnus Dei, mms. 32-end

Published works that are representative of Phase IV include: *God Is Love* (1975/1979), *Improperium* (1979/1979), *Missa Brevis* (1996), and *Missa Christi Ecclesia* (2013).

CHAPTER 5

SURVEY OF ROBINSON'S CHORAL MUSIC

FOR THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

## **O Salutaris Hostia**

Date	Circa 1964
Archive Listing	CMS - 1
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	Low D for bass at final cadence.
Texture	Independent vocal parts
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	13 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Feast of Corpus Christi or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
Text	Eucharist Hymn by St. Thomas Aquinas

*O salutaris Hostia, Quæ cæli pandis ostium: Bella premunt hostilia, Da robur, fer auxilium. Uni trinoque Domino Sit sempiterna gloria, Qui vitam sine termino Nobis donet in patria. Amen.*

O, salutary Victim, Who expandest the door of heaven, Hostile armies press, Give strength; bear aid. To the Triune Lord, May there be everlasting glory; that life without end He to us give in our homeland. Amen.

## **Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis**

Date	Circa 1964
Archive Listing	CMS - 2
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	High tessitura for soprano
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	Magnificat 41 measures; Nunc dimittis 31 measures
Phase	I - post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Evensong; Magnificat (4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent)
Text	Magnificat, Luke 1: 46-55; Nunc dimittis, Luke 2:29-32

### **Magnificat**

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things. And the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers Abraham, and his seed forever. Amen.



**Nunc dimittis**

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

**Evening Service**

Date	1964
Archive Listing	Not listed; Manuscript has been lost
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Evensong; Magnificat (4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent)
Text	Magnificat, Luke 1: 46-55; Nunc dimittis, Luke 2:29-32

**Magnificat**

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things. And the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers Abraham, and his seed forever. Amen.

**Nunc dimittis**

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

## **Ecce sacerdos**

Date	1967
Archival Listing	CMS - 4
Dedication	Commissioned by the 100 <sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Michael Ramsey
Voicing	SATB
Range	High tessitura for soprano, includes a C6
Instrumentation	Brass, Timpani, Organ. (Trumpet in Bb 1 & 2; Trombone 1 & 2)
Score	Manuscript and Engraved
Published	No
Tempo	Maestoso, Allegro, Andante, Allegro, Maestoso
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Form Intro (Maestoso) A (Allegro) B (Andante/Solo), A (instrumental), Coda (Gloria Patri)
Length	137 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Liturgical Use	Ordination of Priest or Bishop
Text	Ecclesiasticus 44:16-27

*Ecce sacerdos magnus, qui in diebus suis placuit Deo. Ideo jurejurando fecit illum Dominus crescere in plebem suam. Benedictionem omnium gentium dedit illi et testamentum suum confirmavit super caput ejus. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto: Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God. Therefore, by an oath, the Lord made him increase among his people. He gave him the blessing of all nations, and confirmed his covenant upon his head. Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## Salutation, Dance and Nocturne

Date	1968
Archive Listing	CMS – 5
Dedication	Hackley School – Tarrytown, NY
Voicing	TTBB
Range	High tessitura for tenor
Instrumentation	Organ (Difficult)
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Mvt. 1 – No initial tempo, <i>misterioso tempo later</i> Mvt. 2 – Not indicated Mvt. 3 – No initial tempo for introduction; when chorus entrance is <i>allegro</i>
Meter	Mvt. 1 – Meter changes by section Mvt. 2 – Common time Mvt. 3 – Mixed meter
Form	Mvt. 1 – A-B-A Mvt. 2 – Through-composed Mvt. 3 – A-B-A
Length	Mvt. 1 – 34 measures Mvt. 2 – 35 measures Mvt. 3 – 97 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate (organ part is difficult)
Liturgical Use	Not for liturgical use; written for concert stage.
Additional Notes	It was recorded on LP with Robinson playing the organ at the premier. Difficult organ part, extremely rhythmic, use of ostinato in left-hand and pedal. Accompaniment does not always support the vocal line.

Text

I - Ave Maria

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;  
benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus [Christus].  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus [Christ].  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

II – Alleluia

Alleluia

III – Grant Us Peace!

Grant us peace, thy most precious gift and enable us to be its messenger to all people and its advocate in the council of nations. Grant us piece thy most precious gift. Bless our country that it may ever be a stronghold of piece and its advocate in the council of nations. May contentment reign within its halls health and happiness within its homes. Plant virtue in every heart and may the love of thy name hallow every heart and home. Praised be thou o Lord, Praise though o lord give of peace. Amen.

## **Hodie Christus Natus est**

Date	1968/1979
Archive Listing	Not listed; manuscript has been lost
Dedication	Commissioned by the Hass family for CBS Christmas Broadcast
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Unknown
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser (Out of Print)
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Liturgical Use	Christmas
Text	The liturgy of the Vesper Service for Christmas Day. Paraphrase of Luke 2:11, 13-14, and Psalm 33:1.

*Hodie Christus natus est  
hodie Salvator apparuit:  
hodie in terra canunt Angeli,  
laetantur Archangeli:  
hodie exsultant justī, dicentes:  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, alleluja.*

Today is Christ born;  
today the Savior has appeared;  
today the Angels sing,  
the Archangels rejoice;  
today the righteous rejoice, saying:  
Glory to God in the highest. Alleluia!

### **Eucharistica Gesänge**

Date	1970/1974
Archive Listing	Not listed; manuscript has been lost
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Unknown
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Phase	Unknown
Liturgical Use	Eucharist/Communion
Text	Unknown
Notes	Twelve motets in honor of the Blessed Sacrament

### **In the Chill of Bleak Midwinter (Ave Verum)**

Date	1971/1979
Archival Listing	CPub – 6
Dedication	to Gerre Hancock
Voicing	Unison or 2-part chorus
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ; organ registration appears in the score
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Delicately, like a Trouvere, very fast and light
Meter	2/4
Form	ABA
Length	87 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Advent/Christmas
Text	by Imogen Howe

In the chill of bleak midwinter, when the frost was bitter and deep,  
In a stable in a manger lay the Christ child sound asleep,  
lay sound asleep.

Ox and ass did not awake Him, standing guard beside His bed;  
Shepherds whispered to each other, “See the light a round His head,  
around His head.”

Have mercy, O holy Sweet Redeemer, Son of Mary



## **Diffusa Est**

Date	1973
Archive Listing	CMS – 3
Dedication	St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY
Voicing	TTBB
Range	High tessitura for tenor
Instrumentation	Organ; organ registration is noted (Strings and Clarinet)
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Allegretto
Meter	4/4
Form	A A' - Coda
Length	36 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical use	Marian feats of the Blessed Virgin Mother/Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Text	Offertory text, from Psalm 44:3.

*Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis: propterea benedixit te Deus in aeternum.*

Grace flows from your lips, because God has blessed you for ever.

## **Oravi Deum meum**

Date	September 19, 1974
Archive Listing	CMS – 6
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	2-part Men
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ and Trumpet Solo; only organ registration is found at the end, strings in pedal.
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Cut-Time
Form	Through-composed
Length	96 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Offertory for Pentecost XVII
Text	Daniel 9: 15-17

*Oravi [ad Dominum,] Deum meum ego Daniel dicens:  
exaudi, Domine, preces servi tui, illumina faciem tuam super sanctuarium tuum,  
et propitius intende populum istum, super quem invocatum est nomen tuum, Deus.*

I, Daniel, prayed to the Lord my God, saying:  
Hear, O Lord, the prayers of Thy servant. Let thy face shine upon thy sanctuary,  
and be merciful to this people, who call upon thy name, O God.

## **God Is Love**

Date	1975/1979
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	for Laura Delano Eastman
Voicing	SATB, Soprano Solo
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ (or piano)
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Andante Moderato
Meter	4/4
Form	ABA
Length	24 measures
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	General

### **Text**

Beloved, let us love one another: For love is from God: And ev'ry one who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love does not know God: For God is love. In this we have come to know His love, that He lay down His life for us, And we like-wise out to lay down our life for our brethren. Be loved, let us love one another: For God is love, God is love.

## **Christus Factus Est**

Date	1976/1979
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	to the memory of Grieg Tabor, Priest and Rector
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Tenderly; alternating with slower and faster sections.
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	ABA'
Length	48 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Palm Sunday Gradual, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday
Text	Derived from Philippians 2:8-9

*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens  
usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.  
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen,  
quod est super omne nomen.*

Christ became obedient for us unto death,  
even to the death, death on the cross.  
Therefore God exalted Him and gave Him a name  
which is above all names.

## **Justitiae Domini rectae**

Date	1975
Archive Listing	CMS – 7
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	Unison and 2 part
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Allegretto a piano
Meter	6/8
Form:	Through-composed
Length	44 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately Easy
Liturgical Use	Offertory for Lent III and Pentecost IX
Text	Psalm 18: 9a, 11b-12a

*Justitiae Domini rectae, laetificantes corda;  
et judicia eius dulciora super mel et favum.  
Nam servus tuus custodit ea.*

The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart  
his judgments sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.  
For thy servant keeps them.

## **Hosanna filio David**

Date	1976
Archive Listing	CMS –
Dedication	Commissioned by The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY
Voicing	SSATB
Range	High tessitura for soprano
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed
Form	Through-composed
Length	15 measures
Phase	Phase I – post-Neo-classic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical use	Antiphon for Psalm Sunday
Text	Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9-10, luke 19:38, John 12:13

*Hosanna filio David:*  
*benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*  
*Rex Israel: Hosanna in excelsis.*

Hosanna to the son of David:  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
O King of Israel: Hosanna in the highest.

### **Infant Redeemer (Ave Maria)**

Date	1976/1979
Archive Listing	CPub7
Dedication	for Louis Zeyer (1975)
Voicing	Unison or Two-Part
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ or Piano Organ Registration Given
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes, Theodore Presser
Tempo	Gentry, in 2
Meter	6/8
Form	ABA (Coda)
Length	38 measures
Phase	Phase III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical use	Christmas

#### **Text**

Infant Redeemer, holy mother; smile on these creatures watching here by your side.  
Infant Redeemer, holy mother; shepherds and wise men pray with you to abide.  
Oxen by the manger shield you from icy wind; the sparrow in the rafters call your name.  
Jesus, Jesus.

Infant Redeemer, holy mother, smile on us now and in the hour of trial.  
Now and forever we will adore you; Smile on us now and in the hour of trial. Amen.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum;  
benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus [Christus].  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;  
blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus [Christ].  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



**Solomons [sic] Prayer**

Date	1977
Dedication	Commissioned by St. Paul's by the Sea, Jacksonville, Florida
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Chamber Orchestra
Score	Manuscript
Published	No

## **Super Flumina**

Date	September 24, 1977
Archive Listing	CMS – 8
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	3-part Men
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Misterioso
Form	Through-composed
Length	23 measures
Phase	IV – Blended (II – 12-tone accompaniment figures)
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Offertory for Pentecost XX
Text	Psalm 136, v. 1

*Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion.*

Over the waters of Babylon, there we sat and wept, as we reminisced about Sion.

**Domine in auxilium**

Date	August 27, 1977
Archive Listing	CMS – 9
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	Unison (Brief 2-part harmony)
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	No indication
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	37 measure
Phase	I-post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Motet for Pentecost XVI
Text	Psalm 39: 14b-15

*Domine in auxilium meum respice.*

*Confundantur et revereantur qui quaerunt animam meam ut auferant eam.*

Make haste, O Lord, to help me.

Let them be ashamed and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it.

### **Ecce virgo concipiet**

Date	December 23, 1978
Archive Listing	CMS – 10
Dedication	For Henson
Voicing	Unison, 2 or 3-part divisi
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Common time
Form	Through-composed
Length	21 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Communion motet for Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin during Advent and for the Annunciation. Communion antiphon for Advent IV.
Text	Isaiah 7:14

*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium  
et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel.  
Alleluia.*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and shall call his name Immanuel, God with us.  
Alleluia.

**Meditabor** [in mandatis tuis]

Date	February 18, 1978
Archive Listing	CMS – 11
Dedication	Audrey
Voicing	SATB
Range	High tessitura for soprano
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	No beginning tempo, ending indicates Grave.
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	43 measures [one measure says “interlude”]
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Liturgical Use	Offertory for Lent II; Ordinary Time 29.
Text	Psalm 118: 47, 48a

*Meditabor in mandatis tuis, quae dilexi valde:  
et levabo manus meas ad mandata tua, quae dilexi.*

I will meditate on thy commandments, which I have loved exceedingly:  
and I will lift up my hands to thy commandments, which I have loved.

## **Terra Tremuit**

Date	1978/1979
Archive Listing	CPub – 4
Dedication	Commissioned by Mrs. John Huston
Voicing	SATB
Range	High tessitura for soprano
Instrumentation	Organ; 2 Trumpets, 2 Trombones
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Andante con moto
Meter	12/8 to 4/4
Form	A-A'
Length	44 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassical
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Liturgical Use	Offertory Proper for Easter
Text	Psalm 75: 9-10

*Terra tremuit et quievit:  
Dum resurgeret in iudicio Deus.  
Alleluia.*

The earth trembled, and was still:  
When God arose to judgement.  
Alleluia.

## **Christmas Alleluia**

Date	1979/1980
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Commissioned by the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Allegramente
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	ABA
Length	43 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately difficult
Liturgical Use	Proper Alleluia, First Mass of Christmas

### **Text**

#### **Alleluia**

Good news and great joy to all, to all the world.

Today is born, is born a Saviour.

Today is born, is born a Saviour, Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

## Improperium

Date	1979/1979
Archive Listing	CPub8
Dedication	Commissioned by the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY. For Nancy
Voicing	Unison or 2-Part
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Gently
Meter	4/4
Form	ABA
Length	95 measures
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Offertory for Palm Sunday

### Text

*Improperium expectavit cor meum et miseriam et sustinui qui simul mecum contristaretur et non fuit; consolantem me quæsivi et non inveni. et dederunt in escam meam fel, et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.*

My heart expected reproach and misery and I desired one who would grieve with me and there was none: I sought one to console me, and I found none: and they gave me gall as my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.



## Psalm 134

Date	1980
Archive Listing	CMS – 12
Dedication	Commissioned by the Cathedral of the Incarnation For David, Mary, and Lisa Anne
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript & Engraved
Published	No
Tempo	Allegretto, Vivo, Allegretto, Movendo
Meter	Mixed Meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	56 measures
Phase	I – post-Neo-classic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Psalm Setting
Text	Latin

*Canticum graduum. Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum, omnes servi Domini:  
qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostri.  
In noctibus extollite manus vestras in sancta, et benedicite Dominum.  
Benedicat te[tibi] Dominus ex Sion, qui fecit caelum et terram*

## **O Magnum Mysterium**

Date	January 5, 1980
Archive Listing	CMS – 13
Dedication	For Imogen
Voicing	TBB
Range	Tenor 1 (high G and A)
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Common time
Form	Through Composed
Length	25 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Responsorial chant from Matins of Christmas
Text	Isaiah 1:3, Luke 2:7, and Philippians 2: 6-7

*O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, jacentem in praeseptio! Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Iesum Christum. Alleluia!*

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger! Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

## **Jubilate Deo**

Date	1980/1987
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Dedicated to Mr. John Hurston
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Allegro
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	A-A' with interludes
Length	67 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately - difficult
Liturgical Use	Psalm Setting
Text	Psalm 100

*Jubilate Deo universa terra: psalmum dicite nomine ejus: Venite et audite, et narrabo vobis, omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit Dominus animae meae. Alleluia.*

Be joyful in God, all you lands; sing the glory of his Name; sing the glory of his praise. Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me. Alleluia.

**Dum medium**

Date	December 20, 1981
Archive Listing	CMS – 14
Dedication	Commissioned by Mrs. John Huston. Premiered Christmas Eve, St. Mary the Virgin, 1981. To Mary Huston
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Orchestra (strings, two oboes, harp, and Bb Trumpet) Choral and Keyboard Reduction
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Moderato
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	50 measures
Phase	II – Serial or Atonal
Note	Organized by Forte's Set-Class Theory
Level of Difficulty	Moderately Difficult
Liturgical Use	Introits for Sundays after Christmas
Text	Wisdom 18, Psalm 94

*Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet, omnipotens sermo tuus, Domine de coelis a regalibus sedibus venit. Dominus regnavit, decorum induit, indutus est Dominus fortitudinem et praecinxit se.*

While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course. Thy Almighty word, O Lord, came down from heaven from thy royal throne. The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty: the lord is clothed with strength and hath girded himself.

### **The Spice She Brought and Sweet Perfume**

Date	1981/1984
Archive Listing	None
Dedication	In memory of James Huston
Voicing	SATB with divisi and optional Soprano solo
Range	High tessitura for men's voices
Instrumentation	Organ; With registrations
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Allegretto, Adagio, Allegretto, Adagio, Andante, Allegretto
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	ABA' Codetta
Length	72 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately difficult
Liturgical Use	Easter Vigil
Text	by John Newton

Mary to her Savior's tomb hasted at the early dawn, Spice she brought and sweet perfume, but the Lord she loved was gone. For a while she weeping stood, struck with sorrow and surprise, Shedding tears a plenteous flood, for her heart supplied her eyes. O my Savior, where has my Saviour gone? O my Savior, here is my Savior, He is risen, is risen from the tomb. Alleluia. He is risen from the tomb.

## **Had I But Pinions**

Date	June 12, 1982
Archive Listing	CMS – 15
Dedication	Commissioned by Mrs. John Huston for Chris [Fred Christian]
Voicing	SATB; soprano solo
Range	Choral parts are standard; solo soprano sings B5 & C6, <i>pp</i> .
Instrumentation	Organ, with optional French Horn and Harp.
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Andante
Meter	3/4
Form	Verse - Refrain
Length	100 measures
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy for Chorus; Difficult for Solo Soprano
Liturgical Use	All Saints, Funeral, Memorial Service
Text	Psalm 55:6

Had I but pinions of a dove to fly away and be at rest: Far, far away would be my flight; in the wilderness would I settle. To my haven would I hasten out of the sweeping wind and tempest. I'll fly away and be at rest.

## **Lo the Winter Is Past**

Date	1986
Archive Listing	CMS – 16
Dedication	Commissioned by Mrs. John Huston for Margaret Huston's Wedding
Voicing	SATB – Solo Soprano
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ, Trumpet, Harp
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Andante e Piano; Piu Lento
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	ABA'
Length	30 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately - Easy
Liturgical Use	Easter Anthem
Text	Song of Solomon 2:11-12

My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.  
For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the  
time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The  
fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.  
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. My beloved is mine, and I am His:

## **Domine Deus**

Date	1986/1987
Archive Listing	CPub – 2
Dedication	Commissioned by St. John's Episcopal Church, Cold Spring Harbor, New York
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Tempo	Moderato E Grazioso; Allegro Marcato E Misterioso;
Meter	12/8
Form	Through-composed
Length	57 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Liturgical Use	Motet, Offertory for the Dedication of a Church
Text	I Chronicles 29: 17-18

*Deus meus, in simplicitate cordis mei laetus obtuli universa: et populum tuum qui repertus est vidi cum ingenti gaudio: Deus Israel, custodi hanc voluntatem, Domine Deus.*

My God, with a simple heart have I joyfully offered everything; and thy people who are gathered here I have beheld with immense joy: God of Israel, preserve this good intention, O Lord God.



## Elevation

Date	April 1987
Archive Listing	CMS – 17
Dedication	In Memory of Gene Kyoto
Voicing	SATB (Two part, S & T divisi)
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	English horn (no keyboard)
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Molto Rubato e dolente
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Rit. A (Rit.) A (Rit.) A (Rit.)
Length	92 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Liturgical Use	Communion, Antiphon to Magnificat in Vespers on the Feast of Corpus Christi.
Text	O Sacrum Convivium (St. Thomas Aquinas)

*O sacrum convivium! in quo Christus sumitur: recolitur memoria passionis eius: mens impletur gratia: et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur. Alleluia.*

O sacred banquet! in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory to us is given. Alleluia.

## Lamb of God

Date	December 28, 1988
Archive Listing	CMS – 18
Dedication	for Christina
Voicing	SA, unison
Range	Standard; Sopranos asked to sing <i>ppp</i> in upper range.
Instrumentation	Organ (registration is given strings and flute Harmonic)
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Cut-time
Form	Through Composed
Length	36 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclastic
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Communion, sung during fraction of the Host.

### Text

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*  
*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*  
*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.*

Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God, you who take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

## **Psalm 150**

Date	1998
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	for John Huston
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Edition-Peters
Tempo	Allegro
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	ABA
Length	67 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately difficult
Liturgical Use	Psalm Setting, Sung during Lauds
Text	Psalm 150

Alleluia. Praise God in his holy temple, praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him for his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with lute and harp. Praise him with timbrel and dance, praise him with strings and pipe. Praise him with well-tuned cymbals, praise him with clashes of cymbals, let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

**Nous voici dans la ville** [Thought to be Take heart, the journey's ended.]

Date	1997
Archive Listing	Not listed; missing from personal archive.
Score	Missing
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Unknown
Text	Unknown

**Take heart, the Journey's Ended** (Incomplete)

Date	December 24, 1997
Archive Listing	CMS – 19
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Not given, shifts from bar-to-bar
Form	Strophic
Phase	Unknown
Level of Difficulty	Unknown
Length	25 measures
Liturgical Use	Advent; Christmas Eve
Text	Anonymous

Take heart, the journey's ended, I see the glittering lights, where we shall be befriended on this night of nights. Now praise the Lord that led us so safe unto the town where men shall feed and bed us, and I can lay me down.

And how then shall we praise him? Alas, my heart is sore, that we no gifts can raise him who are so very poor. We have as much as any that son the earth do live although we have no penny, we have ourselves to give.

### **Splendor and Honor (Dignus Es)**

Date	2002
Archive Listing	CMS – 20
Dedication	Commissioned by Valerie Dibble Gutierrez for the Bicentennial Anniversary of Christ Church Episcopal, Manhasset, Long Island.
Voicing	SATB
Range	High Baritone and Soprano lines
Instrumentation	Organ, Brass, and Tympani (2 Trumpets in C, Horn in F, Trombone, Tuba
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Tempo	Maestoso & Lento
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Intro, A-A'
Length	90 measures
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Liturgical Use	Anthem for Eastertide
Text	Paraphrase Revelation 4:11; 5: 9-10; 13.

Splendor and honor are yours by right O Lord our God. For you created ev'rything that is. And by your will they were created and have their being. And yours by right, O lamb that was slain, for with your blood you have redeemed for God, for ev'ry family, language, people and nation, a kingdom of priests to serve their God. And so to him who sits upon the throne. And to Christ, Christ the Lamb be worship and praise Dominion and splendor for ever, forever and forevermore.

## Christus Factus Est

Date	2006
Archive Listing	CMS – 21
Dedication	Jasper in Memoriam
Voicing	SSA with Mezzo-Soprano Solo
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Tempo	Andante e dolente
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	54 measures
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Liturgical Use	Palm Sunday Gradual, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday
Text	Derived from Philippians 2:8-9

*Christus factus est pro nobis obediens  
usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.  
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen,  
quod est super omne nomen.*

Christ became obedient for us unto death,  
even to the death, death on the cross.  
Therefore God exalted Him and gave Him a name  
which is above all names.

**Deus, Deus Meus**

Date	2006
Archive Listing	Not listed
Score	Missing
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Unknown
Text	Unknown
Notes	The catalogue compiled by Christopher Creaghan, indicates this piece was based on Psalm 22. The Deus, Deus meus text, however; is based on Psalm 62 and used for the Offertory Antiphon for Easter 4. This manuscript and engraved copy was not found at the Leupold Archive.



**Psalm 112**

Date	2011
Archive Listing	CPU – 31
Dedication	Commissioned by the Donald Sinclair Sutherland Endowments Fund of the Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, Maryland for Kyle Babin.
Voicing	SATB with divisi
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Tempo	Tempos are given in a manner of how to conduct the piece, offering some guidance such as gentle and adagio.
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	168 measures
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Liturgical Use	Psalm Setting
Text	Psalm 112

## **Kyrie**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	CMS – 26
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SA
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	9/8
Form	ABA
Length	43 measures
Phase	I – Neo-Classic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-Easy
Liturgical Use	Mass movement
Text	Greek; Derived from Scripture. See pages 187-188.

**Kyrie, Sanctus, Benedictus qui venit**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	CMS – 25
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed throughout
Form	Kyrie (ABA), Through-composed remaining movements
Length	Kyrie – 56 measures; Sanctus 56 measures
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Liturgical Use	Mass Movement
Notes	Reminiscent of Renaissance Mass
Text	See pages 187-188.

**Sanctus [and Benedictus]** [Fragment with intro, melody for Sanctus and Benedictus]

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	CMS – 24
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	N/A
Instrumentation	Organ
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	4/4
Form	ABA
Length	26 measures
Phase	I – Neo-Classic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Liturgical Use	Mass movement
Text	English (Perhaps for Congregational Use). See pages 187-188.

## **Agnus Dei**

Date	March 1965
Archive Listing	CMS – 23
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Instrumentation	A cappella
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Tempo	Half = 60
Meter	3/2
Form	Through-composed
Length	26 measures
Phase	I – Neo-Classic
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-easy
Liturgical Use	Mass movement
Notes	Reminiscent of Renaissance Mass
Text	English (Perhaps for Congregational Use) See pages 187-188.

## Mass

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	CMS – 27
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ and Trumpet
Phase	I – Neo-classic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Text	Kyrie in Greek; other movements in English. See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	45 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	SATB with soprano solo
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	129 measures

Credo	
Voicing	SATB (SSAA at the Incarnation)
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	111 measures

Sanctus	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Quarter = 128 in Hosanna; Quarter = 144 in Benedictus
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	113 measures

Agnus Dei	No Agnus Dei
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**Missa Concertata** – Givoanni Giorgino

This Mass for SATB choir, organ, realized continuo, and orchestra was edited by McNeil Robinson and Nancy Sartin, a musicologist in the choir of St. Mary the Virgin.

**Requiem**

Date	1965
Archive Listing	Not listed; manuscript lost from personal archive
Dedication	Composed for The Reverend Grieg Tabor
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Unknown
Score	Manuscript; Missing from Composer's Archive
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Mass for the Dead
Text	Unknown what text from the Requiem Robinson used.



**Mass in E Minor**

Date	1967
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Organ, Solo Trumpet
Score	Manuscript; Missing from Composer's Archive
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Mass
Text	See pages 187-188.

## **Missa Brevis**

Date	1968
Archive Listing	CMS – 29
Dedication	To Jim and his fifth year at St. Mary's
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Text	Kyrie in Greek; other movements in English. See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	Men's Voices (3 part divisi)
Range	1 <sup>st</sup> Tenor G4
Tempo	Light and Detached
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	48 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	Men's Voices (Unison to 2-part divisi)
Range	Standard
Tempo	None given
Meter	Mixed
Form	Through-composed
Length	75 measures
Credo	Not included

Sanctus	
Voicing	Men's Voices (Unison to 2-part divisi)
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andante
Meter	2/1
Form	Through-composed
Length	29 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	Men's Voices (Unison)
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andante
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	36 measures

## **Music for the Lord's Supper**

Date	1968/1979
Archive Listing	CMS – 30
Dedication	for David Lowry
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Gently in One
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	26 measures
Gloria	

Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Flowing in Two
Meter	Cut-time
Form	ABA
Length	42 measures

Alleluia	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Moderately
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	6 measures

Verse before Gospel (During Lent)	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Slowly and quietly
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	5 measures

### The Great Thanksgiving

Voicing	Unison, with Priest and Congregation
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Free (Chant-like)
Form	Through-composed
Length	6 measures

### Sanctus

Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Quarter = 112
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	18 measures

### Benedictus

Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	14 measures

### Conclusion of the Canon and Lord's Prayer

Voicing	Unison, with Priest and Congregation
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Free (Chant-like)
Form	Through-composed
Length	Unmeasured

### Pascha Nostrum

Voicing	Unison, with Priest and Congregation
Range	Standard
Tempo	Moderately
Meter	4/4
Form	ABA
Length	8 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	Unison or 2-parts
Range	Standard
Tempo	Quarter = 80
Meter	3/4
Form	AAB
Length	20 measures

**Missa Brevis**

Date	1971
Archive Listing	Not indicated; lost from personal archive.
Dedication	Commissioned by the Trinity Institute
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Organ and Brass
Score	Manuscript; Missing from Composer's Archive
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Mass
Text	See pages 187-188.

**Missa Brevis**

Date	1972
Archive Listing	Not indicated; lost from personal archive.
Dedication	Commissioned by the Trinity Institute
Voicing	SATB
Instrumentation	Organ and Brass
Score	Manuscript; Missing from Composer's Archive
Published	No
Liturgical Use	Mass
Text	See pages 187-188.

## Messe Solennelle

Date	1976; Revised 1983
Archive Listing	CMS – 31
Dedication	for Frederick Thomas Christian White on his birthday
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Instrumentation	Organ and French Horn (Original for Orchestra)
Phase	I – Neo-classic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Choral Parts, Standard; Soprano Solo to C6
Tempo	Andante
Meter	Shift between 3/4 & 4/4
Form	ABA
Length	47 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	SATB
Range	High Tessitura for Tenor and Soprano
Tempo	Presto, Misterioso e agitato, Lento, Presto
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	158 measures

Credo	Not included
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Sanctus	
Voicing	SATB (with Divisi in Treble)
Range	Soprano High Tessitura
Tempo	Maestoso, Misterioso, Più mosso,
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	61 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andante
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	41 measures

## **Missa in die Tribulationes**

Date	1980
Archive Listing	None
Dedication	Commissioned by The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, NY
Score	Engraved
Published	Published
Instrumentation	A cappella
Phase	I – Neo-classic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Moderato
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	88 measures

Gloria	Gloria was omitted; sung during Lent.
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Credo	Not included
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Sanctus	
Voicing	SATB, with Mezzo-Soprano soli
Range	Soprano and Tenor high tessitura.
Tempo	Quarter = 80
Meter	2/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	54 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	SA(A)T(T)B
Range	Soprano and Tenor high tessitura.
Tempo	Lento
Meter	2/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	36 measures



## **Mass for One Small Angel**

Date	June 2, 1984
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Commissioned by the Liturgical Music Foundation, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and Mrs. John Huston. To the memory of Paul Tepper.
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Theodore Presser
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	Unison – 2-part
Range	Standard
Tempo	With movement, very legato; Quarter = 92
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	28 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Allegretto maestoso
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	64 measures

Credo	Not included
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Sanctus	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Maestoso
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	29 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andantino
Meter	3/4
Form	AAB

Length 34 measures

**Messe Militaire/La Salla Mass/Festival Choral Eucharist**

Date 1983  
Archive Listing Not listed  
Dedication Commissioned by La Salle Military Academy (Premiered at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, NY)  
Score Engraved  
Published Yes; Theodore Presser  
Instrumentation Organ, Brass, (2 Bb Trumpets, F Horn, 2 Trombones) and Percussion (Snare Drum, Timpani)  
Phase III – Conservative  
Level of Difficulty Moderate  
Text See pages 187-188.

Kyrie  
Voicing SATB w/ congregation  
Range Standard  
Tempo Alla marcia  
Meter 4/4  
Form ABA  
Length 17 measures

Gloria  
Voicing SATB w/ congregation  
Range Standard  
Tempo Allegretto maestoso  
Meter 4/4  
Form ABA Coda  
Length 45 measures

Credo Not included

Sanctus  
Voicing SATB w/ congregation  
Range Standard  
Tempo Allegro  
Meter 4/4  
Form ABAB  
Length 38 measures

Memorial Acclamation  
Voicing Unison  
Range Standard

Tempo	Half = 66
Meter	Cut-time
Form	Through-composed
Length	9 measures

#### Conclusion of the Canon

Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Half = 66
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	7 measures

#### Agnus Dei

Voicing	2-part in Canon
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andante tranquillo
Meter	Cut-time
Form	AAB
Length	52 measures

## **Missa Brevis (Messe de Joie)**

Date	April 1996
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Commissioned by the American Guild of Organist; Premeired during the 1996 National Conventin at The Church of the Holy Family at the United Nations, New York City, NY
Score	Engraved
Published	Yes; Edition Peters
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	SATB
Range	High Tessitura for Soprano and Tenor
Tempo	Suave e dolce; Quarter = 144
Meter	No meter is indicated, mixed
Form	ABA
Length	139 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	SATB; soprano solo
Range	Standard
Tempo	Molto maestoso
Meter	4/4 and Cut-time
Form	ABA
Length	117 measures

Sanctus	
Voicing	SATB
Range	High Tessitura for Soprano
Tempo	Vivo e brillante, Adante e dolce, Lento
Meter	No meter is indicated, mixed
Form	ABA
Length	86 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Andante
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	34 measures

## **Missa Christi Ecclesia**

Date	2013
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Commissioned by Christ Church, Manhasset, NY. Andrew Yeargin, Director of Music and Organist
Score	Engraved
Published	No (Has been submitted for publication.)
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Text	See pages 187-188.

Kyrie	
Voicing	SA
Range	Standard
Tempo	Misterioso, Moderato
Meter	9/8
Form	ABA
Length	48 measures

Gloria	
Voicing	SATB with Soprano Duet
Range	High Tessitura for Soprano and Tenor
Tempo	Maestoso e articolato, Dolente,
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	ABA
Length	125 measures

Sanctus	
Voicing	SATB with divisi; Soprano Solo
Range	High Tessitura for Soprano and Tenor
Tempo	Quarter = 60
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	ABA
Length	53 measures

Agnus Dei	
Voicing	SATB, Soprano Solo
Range	High Tessitura for Soprano
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	53 measures

## Mass Text

*Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.*

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax  
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.  
Laudamus te; benedicimus te;  
adoramus te; glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.  
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,  
O miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.*

Glory be to God in the highest.  
And in earth peace  
to men of good will.  
We praise Thee; we bless Thee;  
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee  
for Thy great glory.  
O Lord God, Heavenly King,  
God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy upon us.  
For thou only art holy,  
thou only art the Lord,  
thou only art the most high, Jesus Christ.  
Together with the Holy Ghost  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

*Credo in unum Deum;  
Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem coeli et terrae,  
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.  
Credo in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum,  
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.  
Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero,  
Genitum non factum,  
consubstantialtem Patri:  
per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines,  
et propter nostram salutem  
descendit de coelis.  
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est.  
Crucifixus etiam pro nobis  
sub Pontio Pilato,*

I believe in one God;  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible.  
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
begotten of the Father before all worlds;  
God of God, light of light,  
true God of true God,  
begotten not made;  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by Whom all things were made.  
Who for us men  
and for our salvation  
descended from heaven;  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost,  
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.  
He was crucified also for us,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,

Figure 5.1 Text to Mass Proper

*passus et sepultus est.  
 Et resurrexit tertia die  
 secundum Scripturas.  
 Et ascendit in coelum:  
 sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
 Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,  
 judicare vivos et mortuos:  
 cujus regni non erit finis.  
 Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,  
 Dominum, et vivificantem:  
 qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.  
 Qui cum Patre et Filio simul  
 adoratur et conglorificatur:  
 qui locutus est per Prophetas.  
 Credo in unam sanctam  
 catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.  
 Confiteor unum baptisma,  
 in remissionem peccatorum.  
 Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum  
 et vitam venturi sæculi. Amen.*

***Sanctus,** Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus  
 Sabaoth.  
 Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
 Osanna in excelsis.*

***Benedictus** qui venit  
 in nomine Domini.  
 Osanna in excelsis.*

***Agnus Dei,**  
 qui tollis peccata mundi,  
 miserere nobis.  
 Agnus Dei.  
 Dona nobis pacem.*

and was buried.  
 And on the third day He rose again  
 according to the Scriptures:  
 and ascended into heaven.  
 He sitteth at the right hand of the Father;  
 and He shall come again with glory  
 to judge the living and the dead;  
 and His kingdom shall have no end.  
 I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
 the Lord and giver of life,  
 Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,  
 Who with the Father and the Son together  
 is worshipped and glorified;  
 as it was told by the Prophets.  
 And I believe in one holy  
 catholic and apostolic Church.  
 I acknowledge one baptism  
 for the remission of sins.  
 And I await the resurrection of the dead  
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.  
 Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.  
 Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He that cometh  
 in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna in the highest.

Lamb of God,  
 Who takest away the sins of the world,  
 have mercy upon us.  
 Lamb of God.  
 Grant us peace.

Figure 5.1 Text to Mass Proper Continued

## CHAPTER 6

### ROBINSON AND PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE



Figure 6.1 Outside Façade of Park Avenue Synagogue New York City, NY

Robinson had a long and vibrant career as organist and choirmaster at Park Avenue Synagogue, a relationship that lasted for forty-seven years. During this time, Robinson had the pleasure of working with some of the best-known Hazzans and Cantors in the United States. Park Avenue Synagogue valued quality music, both sacred and secular. As mentioned in Chapter Two, during Robinson's tenure, the synagogue commissioned works from noted twentieth-century composers for their Friday evening and Saturday morning Liturgical Music Services. Over the course of his appointment at Park Avenue, he was commissioned to write organ pieces, choral and congregation settings for prayer and hymns. The archival music from Park Avenue Synagogue will be



discussed in Chapter Seven. What follows is Robinson's own story about his relationship with P.A.S. from 1965 to 2007, anniversary announcements, and a tribute offered by Cantor David Lefkowitz at the Memorial Service for Robinson in 2015.

*(August, 2007)*

**'Notes' from My Decades at P.A.S.**

by Neil Robinson

It was May of 1965 when I was first invited to Park Avenue Synagogue and participated in an exhilarating Contemporary Sabbath Evening Music Service, playing the Casavant Pipe Organ used by my illustrious predecessors, Isador Geller and George Crook.<sup>47</sup>

At that time, Park Avenue Synagogue was a small and intimate congregation, very different from what it is today. It was a bastion of informed people whose philanthropy to the arts, science, medicine and education was extremely significant. To safeguard the aesthetic, social and intellectual qualities, applicants for membership were interviewed by members of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the applicant would be comfortable with the congregation and the congregation with him. Protocol was extremely important; letters written by hand and black tie attire worn on Kol Nidre were the norm. Money was rarely mentioned; when necessary, a discreet phone call from the executive director or the Rabbi would suffice.

It was, as some have called it, the last days of the Golden Age, for subtle winds of change were beginning to stir. Three intellectual giants had helped to shape the collective

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<sup>47</sup> A French Casavant Pipe Organ was installed during the construction of the Sanctuary building, which was completed in 1927. That instrument was lovingly maintained until 1986 when it had to be replaced. Geller, who studied and worked with composer David Nowakowsky for two decades at the famous Brody synagogue in Odessa, came to PAS circa 1915 and was our organist until 1952. Crook was with P.A.S. from 1952-1965.

mind-set of the congregation: Milton Steinberg, David Putterman and Judah Nadich.

*Hazzan* David J. Putterman was a man whose life had been struck by tragedy more than once, but who went on with great resolve, always demanding more of himself than of others. His taste in music ran the gamut from the Neo-Classic to the Avant-Garde to Blues. All styles were acceptable as long as they were expertly crafted.

This was the man from whom I would learn all of the Hebrew prayers word by word, the modes and the interpretation of prayer in music. Putterman claimed that I had a “*Yiddisha neshama*,” a Jewish soul. My studies were both exhilarating and exhausting. In the midst of all this, he was introducing me to the premiere composers and great conductors of our time. Our choir included many outstanding voices, including Eleanor Warren, the greatest voice I have ever heard. Putterman’s mantra was “perfect and yesterday.” Of all the large commissions from that time, only one almost caused a “palace revolt.” It was a 1970 “Rock” service utilizing a Moog synthesizer. Ironically, the complete work turned out to be fairly conservative.

David Putterman and his wonderful wife Rhea were to become my surrogate parents. Every summer I would travel to their summer home in Westport for two wonderful weeks of swimming, good food, and music. One summer we spent editing and proofing his book for the Cantors Assembly. He also commissioned me to write several organ pieces, as well as choral and congregational settings for prayers and hymns.

There were so many stories which he shared with me. One of the most touching was the description of his presence in Philadelphia on the dock of the Exodus, and how everyone wept and their spirits soared as she set sail.

In time I would learn of the numbers of people he had helped, never asking anything in return – except once: He had agreed to help Richard Tucker with the understanding that, should Tucker ever reach the opera stage, he would never sing on *Shabbat*. Eventually, Tucker did sing on *Shabbat* and Putterman never spoke to him again.

Rabbi Judah Nadich was an incredible intellect, and considering his ultra-traditional background, was remarkably forward-looking, a visionary if you will. He was also firmly insistent that Jews behave with moral integrity and be held to a higher standard.

Being a very self-contained man, his special acts of kindness were sometimes hard to discern. Once when I was an extremely ill patient at Lenox Hill Hospital, I was told that I would need an I.V. unless I would begin to eat. I was extremely apprehensive about the prospect of falling asleep with a needle in my arm. Unexpectedly, Judah walked into my hospital room. He told me that those in authority had informed him that I had the finest physicians available. While that was a good start, he said, a serving of cold sherbet might be tolerable. If I could at least make the effort, he would be back to tell me a story from the Legends of the Rabbis about a pot of gold. I ate the sherbet and he returned, knowing how well I love a good story.

Judah was to become my very dear friend, and when my father died, his letter of condolence was the first I received.

Judah and his wife Hadassah had the most perfect and remarkable marriage. Their love and respect for each other was inspiring. Hadassah is a formidable thinker in her own right, a gourmet cook (who could make Craig Claiborne sit up and take note!) and a

voracious reader. I remember with such fondness her blue hydrangea at the beach house and her fabulous recipe for ice tea, which no one will ever duplicate.

The first major change I experienced at Park Avenue Synagogue was the transition, at regular Shabbat services, from Ashkenazic pronunciation to Sephardic. It was a quantum leap for a man of David Putterman's age, but he did it with his usual resolve.

I came to know David only toward the end of his career and therefore never heard him at his best. Yet, at *Neilah*, some magic would transform him and there was a passion and fervor in his *davening* that was heart-rending and unforgettable. While putting on his white robe just before the *Neilah* service at his last Yom Kippur, *Hazzan* Putterman turned to me in the "Robing Room" just behind the *Bima* and asked my forgiveness for anything he might have done to offend me. Through this I learned from David the power of humility.

The second important change at PAS came with Putterman's decision to retire after forty-three years. Joseph Howard Katz, Chairman of the Board for many years, related the following to me: Putterman had called him and asked to meet. When they did, David put Joe in the most difficult position he had ever been in. "'Katzie,' do you think I should retire as your *Hazzan*?" It was all Joe could do to say "yes," with tears streaming down his face. Joe was Putterman's closest friend, for they had known each other since their childhood experience of singing together in Cantor Yossele Rosenblatt's choir. Putterman would later relate this same story to me. He said it was the greatest release after so many years of hard work.

Finding a new *Hazzan* for the premiere Conservative Congregation was going to be a huge undertaking. Some five years before these events, I had met and worked with Cantor David Lefkowitz in a nationally televised, live Public Television concert (PBS) featuring the finest cantors in America. His poise, control, stunning musicianship and voice made him, in my mind, the perfect candidate for PAS. So, I now called David Putterman and told him I knew just the right person to carry on his legacy. Putterman responded that it would be inappropriate for *him* to interfere with the choice of his successor, whereupon I replied that it would not be inappropriate to call ‘Katzie’ to tell him about this stunning talent, if he were *not mentioning the position*. At that time, I did not know that Joe already *knew* that Lefkowitz *would* be called! Later when it was announced that indeed Lefkowitz had been *chosen*, I called Putterman and asked if *he* had spoken to Joe. His reply was, “We speak all the time!”

The next big change at PAS was the large new school building. It was a major test for everyone on the staff but somehow we all persevered. With the new building came a major increase of new families wanting a good Jewish education for their children. With these new people there were changes of pace and attitude. The old guard was very old and dying out. The new younger congregants were less formal, but they were very vital and willing to give of their time and energy.

With Rabbi Judah Nadich’s retirement and the arrival of Rabbi David Lincoln, there were even more changes. Morning and evening *minyanim* (services) daily, priestly *duchanen* on Festivals and wonderful traditional elements were added to Shabbat services.

I found in Rabbi David Hamilton Lincoln a most splendid advisor in spiritual matters, and our long lunches with Rabbi Paulette Gross were intellectual *tours de force*. It might be a discussion of the weekly Torah *parishah* or sections of the *Talmud*, or he might suddenly launch into a discourse about the Jews of India! Whatever it was, Paulette and I would leave enriched and happy.

Today, because of its dynamic lay leadership, the synagogue offers a treasure trove of riches and opportunities for all its members. As an institution, Park Avenue Synagogue has changed dramatically, but its health and vitality are evident everywhere. With people like Rabbi Kenneth Stern and Cantor Nancy Abramson, how can an institution go wrong?

I have been fortunate to have influenced many young people through my service in this Congregation. My music is heard at major synagogues in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York's Temple Emanu-El, among other places. I have been privileged to work with great leaders, wonderful choirs and to have met the foremost composers of our time. During this span of more than four decades at Park Avenue Synagogue, I have received even more than I have contributed.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This 2007 essay by McNeil Robinson II was written in preparation for Park Avenue Synagogue's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which was a 10-month Celebration from September 2007 through June 2008. Mr. Robinson's retirement in June of 2012 featured a concert and interviews of tribute to his brilliant 47-year career as Organist and Choirmaster. His tenure of service was the longest of anyone in the history of the Congregation, reaching numerous generations of congregants and spanning many different eras of its history. Robinson passed away in May of 2015, exactly 50 years after his debut. At the time of this essay, and until his death, McNeil Robinson was also the distinguished Organist and Choirmaster at Holy Trinity Church and was chair of the Organ Department at the Manhattan School of Music.

from  
Park Ave. Synagogue  
MONTHLY BULLETIN  
honoring Mr. Robinson's  
20th Anniversary

April, 1985

### Neil Robinson Honored By Congregation

The congregation will honor its organist, Neil Robinson, on the occasion of his twentieth anniversary as Organist at Park Avenue Synagogue at a Kiddush following services on the first day of Passover, Saturday, April 6.

It would be hard to imagine an event, sacred or secular, at Park Avenue Synagogue without the virtuosity of our organist Neil Robinson being an integral part of the proceedings.

A concert organist, recording artist and composer, Mr. Robinson, in addition to being organist in our synagogue, has concertized extensively in both American hemispheres, in Europe and in the Orient. He serves on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes College of Music.

*Neil Robinson: continued on page 4, column 1*

### Neil Robinson

*(continued from page 1)*

Mr. Robinson considers his years at Park Avenue Synagogue years of joy. "The education I received from Hazzan David Putterman and Cantor David Lefkowitz is one I could never have received in a conservatory or university. The lasting friendships I have made are very special to me. Some of the most extraordinary words of wisdom I have heard have come from the pulpit of the Park Avenue Synagogue. It is truly a blessing to love what you do and to be able to do it for twenty years".

Be sure to join us on the Lower Level after services on Saturday, April 6 to raise your glass to Neil Robinson.

Figure 6.2 Newspaper Clipping, Neil Robinson Honored by Congregation

THE  
LEOPOLD  
ARCHIVES

*The Sarah and Samuel Shapiro Memorial Service*

**PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE**

*takes pleasure in announcing the*

Fourteenth Annual  
Shabbat Morning Service  
of  
Classical Liturgical Music  
*honoring*

**NEIL ROBINSON**

for 25 years of inspired service as organist  
of our congregation

Rabbi David H. Lincoln  
Cantor David Lefkowitz

*with*

The Synagogue Concert Choir  
Abraham Kaplan, *conductor*  
Neil Robinson, *organist*

**SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 1990**  
5 Nisan 5750  
9:15 A.M.

*Kiddush-Reception in honor of the artists  
will follow the Service*

Figure 6.3 Flyer; 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Announcement, Park Avenue Synagogue



## PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE

**Fifty-Second Annual  
Friday Evening Liturgical Music Service**

**שִׁירוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת**

**"Shirot v'Hodaot"**

A Shabbat Eve Service Composed By

**NEIL ROBINSON**

*in celebration of his 30 years  
as our distinguished organist*

\* \* \*

Rabbi David H. Lincoln  
Cantor David Lefkowitz

*with*

The Synagogue Concert Choir  
Abraham Kaplan, *conductor*  
Neil Robinson, *organist*

\* \* \*

November 17, 1995  
25 Cheshvan 5756

Figure 6.4 Flyer; 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Announcement, Park Avenue Synagogue



### **Rinah U'tefillah: Song and Prayer**

#### **A Joyous Friday Night Celebration For All Ages!**

This increasingly popular Park Avenue Synagogue service will be held on two more Friday nights between now and the end of this year, on:

- Friday evening, April 11th and
- Friday evening, May 9th.

The service provides a spiritual bridge between the hectic pace of the week and the serenity of Shabbat. Come participate in special songs, prayer, meditation and Hasidic tales. These services are led by the rabbis and cantors, with our organist Neil Robinson and special guest musicians.

A festive Kiddush will follow these services.

### **WEG Explores Jewish Genetic Disorders on April 7**

On Tuesday, February 18, 2003, *The New York Times* Science section featured an article entitled "Using Genetic Tests, Ashkenazi Jews Vanquish Sickle Cell." The article discussed ten genetic diseases which are highly prevalent among Ashkenazi Jews, with particular emphasis on sickle cell disorder. The article described how geneticists waged a highly effective educational and diagnostic screening campaign within the Jewish population to screen for and counsel carriers of this genetic disorder. By doing so, they virtually eliminated the disease.

Randi-Elle Zinberg, assistant professor and instructor of human genetics

## **Neil Robinson To Be Honored in Celebration of Four Decades of Music**

The Park Avenue Christian Church, at 1010 Park Avenue at 85th Street, will present a **Ruby Jubilee Concert** honoring **McNeil Robinson** and his significant contributions to American sacred music on **Tuesday, April 8, 2003 at 7:30 p.m.**

One of the most prominent musicians in New York City, Neil Robinson has served as music director and organist for the Park Avenue Christian Church since 1984 and has also been organist and choirmaster at the Park Avenue Synagogue since 1966.

Neil has served our congregation, for the most part, behind the scenes. He has played our organ at every High Holiday, Festival and Shabbat Service, has conducted the Synagogue Concert Choir for many of our special Liturgical Music and Musicales Programs, and has provided the music at virtually all weddings held at our synagogue. And he has done so with as much respect for our Jewish musical heritage, its rituals and traditions as for his own Christian ones. He is a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

The concert, honoring his 40 years of music composition and performance in



**McNeil Robinson**

New York City, will include his organ and choral music, hymn tunes, and an organ improvisation by the organist/composer, a unique talent for which he has received consistent critical acclaim from the international press.

The program will include excerpts from Robinson's *Sacred Service*, composed for the Park Avenue Synagogue, the *Missa Brevis*, commissioned by the American Guild of Organists for their 1996 National Convention, as well as other of his compositions.

The concert will be followed by a Champagne Musicales with toasts from numerous artists with whom Neil has collaborated over the past 40 years.

Tickets are \$100 for the concert and reception, and \$30 (suggested contribution) for the concert only. Reservations are required and can be made by calling Louise Hamilton at 1-212-288-3246, ext. 28.

Do plan to join the Ruby Jubilee Concert at the Park Avenue Christian Church in honor of Neil on Tuesday evening, April 8, 2003. Don't forget to call and make your reservation!

and a genetic counselor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, will discuss **Jewish Genetic Disorders:** diagnosing, treating and compensating for cellular aberrations of higher frequency in the Jewish community.

And Dr. Jeffrey Kress, a clinical psychologist and faculty member in the Jewish education department at JTS,

will describe what it's like to be the parent of a five year-old son who has familial dysautonomia, one of the genetic disorders found among Ashkenazi Jews.

Plan to join WEG on **Monday, April 7th** for this highly informative program. The usual time for socializing and refreshments will take place both before and after the 8 p.m. program.

Figure 6.5 Flyer; 40th Anniversary Announcement, Park Avenue Synagogue

## **Tribute at McNEIL ROBINSON Memorial Service – October 13, 2015**

Cantor David Lefkowitz<sup>49</sup>

Fifty years ago, on Friday Evening May 7<sup>th</sup> 1965, a brilliant young Juilliard student, McNeil Robinson made his debut at Park Avenue Synagogue. The occasion was a celebrated annual music event – the congregation’s 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Sabbath Eve Service of Contemporary Liturgical Music – commissioned music written by distinguished American composers. This premiere performance of a major new work by the composer Jack Gottlieb was eagerly anticipated by the city’s knowledgeable music audience. But, the synagogue’s organist was ailing and too ill to be there! With very short notice, the enthusiastic Mr. Neil Robinson was contacted and rose to the occasion, thrilling the nervous composer, the cantor, the conductor and chorus – as well as the entire congregation of worshippers and sophisticated music lovers!

Precisely one-half century later, on Saturday May 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 – which was the exact same weekend in May, which marked the Fiftieth Anniversary of his memorable debut – our dear friend, teacher and colleague, McNeil Robinson, was taken by his Creator to eternally bless the heavens with his celestial music.

Tonight, we will hear of the amazing and diverse ecumenical talents and world-renowned career of this exquisite artist! My role here now is just to share with you briefly the unique and longest professional connection of his lifetime – his 47-year devotion to Park Avenue Synagogue, from 1965 to 2012 – the longest actual tenure of any professional in our congregation’s history!

Right from his beginning with the synagogue as a 22-year old, Mr. Robinson studied eagerly with its renowned cantor, Hazzan David J. Putterman who had been with

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<sup>49</sup> Lefkowitz, David. Eulogy at McNeil Robinson Memorial Service, 13 October 2015, New York.

the congregation for 32 years. In a recent essay, Robinson writes that Putterman was “the man from whom I would learn all of the Hebrew prayers word by word, the modes and the interpretation of prayer in music... He introduced me to the premiere composers and great conductors of our time.”

Cantor Putterman was Neil Robinson’s cantor for 11 years, until retiring in 1976. I was privileged to be his successor, and had the unparalleled joy of working with Neil for 33 years! Cantor Azi Schwartz then followed me in 2009, and was honored to be with him for 3 years until Robinson’s retirement in 2012. Rabbi Judah Nadich had been Neil’s distinguished rabbi, friend and teacher for 22 years until he retired in 1987, when Rabbi David Lincoln came and enjoyed another 21 years of close friendship and study with Neil. Our current Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove succeeded Lincoln in 2008, and had the joy of Neil Robinson’s final 4 years with Park Avenue Synagogue.

As the organist and choirmaster of our congregation, Mr. Robinson brilliantly brought to life the liturgical music of hundreds of composers. He not only was our musical treasure, but he formed close relationships with our officers, congregants and clergy over nearly five decades, including so many Assistant rabbis and cantors. His zest for life, his humor and his charm were legendary! He brought aesthetic and spiritual distinction to all Sabbath, Festival and High Holyday Services; and likewise to concerts, weddings and funerals. What memorable ambience he added to the Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations – for literally thousands of Park Avenue Synagogue adolescents! Many of us here tonight have nostalgic memories of our own child’s special day. And who can forget Neil’s original compositions created for many very special occasions in the congregation: including both of my daughters’ Bat Mitzvah and Wedding Ceremonies!

My association with McNeil Robinson was something way beyond unique. The opportunity to work all of my 33 years at Park Avenue Synagogue with the complementing artistry of Mr. Robinson is certainly among the greatest blessings of my professional career. Singing contemporary music as well as great music from five centuries of tradition, with full-time professional choir, organ accompaniment by Robinson, and more than sixty liturgical music services with the distinguished choral conductor Abraham Kaplan – was itself a source of accomplishment. But when it came to the heart of Jewish prayer in worship, with the Cantor’s improvised chanting to interpret the texts – with modulating keys and modes for all diverse occasions of Sabbath & Festivals, weddings and funerals; this is where the improvisational music-making between Neil Robinson and myself developed way beyond unique! It was truly miraculous! What more could any cantor ever desire or even imagine?

We also had constant fun and light moments. Robinson was genuinely diverse and ecumenical. He absorbed the emotions and traditions of whatever church or faith he was serving at that moment, and could comfortably convey the combination of his own experiences. He joked with me, telling of someone in his church who stated that: “Lately, Neil’s music is sounding a bit too Jewish!” And, just prior to his retirement three years ago, in an interview with a genuine admirer who said she was so moved by his recent new setting of “May the Words of My Mouth...” Neil indicated that the piece was actually composed while thinking nostalgically of his own childhood feelings, when completing his daily prayers beside his mother.

The musical diversity of McNeil Robinson and his orchestral imagination translated into incredible textures. There never was anything routine – each occasion

could be a new experience in spontaneity. His genius organ abilities would translate the prayer emotions, or occasion of the moment through music. It might be a blazing and electrifying drama... or it might convey an almost heartbreaking emotional sensitivity. These abilities of Mr. Robinson added so much to my own sense of cantorial interpretations of the liturgy.

Most of all, Neil was a community person. A congregant recently described him as the fabric of the Shabbat morning service. On the rare occasions when he could not be present – such as Passover coinciding with Easter Sunday! – people often said: “Better to have no one at the organ than to have a replacement for Neil!” Much of the congregation experienced anxiety as his announced retirement in 2012 drew close. To alleviate concerns, he accepted the invitation of the committee to be involved in selecting the appropriate new organist. And, 3 years earlier in 2009, he was asked to join the committee to select a new cantor to be my successor! And he certainly chose the very best: Cantor Azi Schwartz!

Through all his friendships and interactions with the synagogue’s clergy, officers and congregants over a five-decade expanse, he realized more than anyone in the congregation could, just how much was changing. Hundreds of people from whom he had learned, and admired with appreciation were no more. And, while faces, people and styles were constantly changing in the synagogue’s rapidly-growing population, Neil realized also that he had experienced enormous changes throughout so many different eras of new approaches to liturgy, worship and music. He was amazingly responsive to radical differences that almost no one else could even be aware of! Yet, there are limits for people, of such depth and experience, in what they can truly accept in one lifetime.

Mr. Robinson had respect for so many types of music (and you would not believe the joking imitations of music he might suddenly play during a rehearsal break!). He also, though, was driven by integrity and the intention of music in both Church and Synagogue. He absolutely loved experimentation and new sounds, if the motivation was sincere, and was dedicated to the ultimate intention of one underlying purpose:

WORSHIP!

Neil composed well over 100 settings for Park Avenue Synagogue. I want to share with you just a few phrases, which I have excerpted from a joyous setting of “L’cha Dodi” – depicting in a lilting manner the poem that “Welcomes Shabbat” as an awaited Sabbath Bride! This was one of Neil Robinson’s early transformations in liturgical style – dating all the way back to 1982. We all loved it then; I still love it now; and I am delighted to sing a tiny excerpt of it in honor of our beloved Neil!!!

May our dear Neil rest in peace; and may we be blessed by his joy and his creative gifts. AMEN.

“Y’varech’cha Adonai, V’yishm’rech’cha”--  
The Lord bless you, and keep you. AMEN.

“Ya-er Adonai Panav Elecha, Viy-chu-neka”—  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. AMEN.

Yi-sah Adonai Panav Elecha, V’yasem L’cha.. Shalom”.  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you Peace. AMEN.

CHAPTER 7

SURVEY OF ROBINSON'S CHORAL MUSIC FOR  
THE JEWISH TRADITION



## Adon Olam

Date	October 17, 1977
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indication
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	Unison; Hazzan (Tenor) & Congregation
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	4/4
Form	Strophic
Length	10 measures; 4 verses
Liturgical Use	Daily and Shabbat (Sabbath) liturgy

### Additional Information

Prayer Book pg 515 Closing hymn used at the end of a Shabbat service, often interchanged with Yigdal. It extols God being sovereign, praises for keeping us safe, etc. In the Sephardic rite, normally only sung on Saturday morning, in the Ashkenazi (Eastern European) rite, can be used on Friday or Saturday. It's also the closing hymn for festivals and both hymns are sung on Yom Kippur.

### Text

*Adon olam, asher malach,  
b'terem kol y'tzir nivra.  
L'et na'asah v'cheftzo kol,  
azai melech sh'mo nikra.  
V'acharey kichlot hakol,  
l'vado yimloch nora.*

*V'hu haya, v'hu hoveh,  
v'hu yih'yeh b'tifara.  
V'hu echad, v'eyn sheni  
l'hamshil lo, l'hachbira.  
B'li reishit, b'li tachlit,  
v'lo ha'oz v'hamisrah.*

*V'hu Eli, v'chai go'ali,  
v'tzur chevli b'et tzarah.  
V'hu nisi umanos li,  
m'nat kosi b'yom ekra.*

*B'yado afkid ruchi  
b'et ishan v'a'irah.  
V'im ruchi g'viyati,  
Adonai li v'lo ira.*

The Lord of the Universe who reigned  
before anything was created.  
When all was made by his will  
He was acknowledged as King.

And when all shall end  
He still all alone shall reign.  
He was, He is,  
and He shall be in glory.

And He is one, and there's no other,  
to compare or join Him.  
Without beginning, without end  
and to Him belongs dominion and power.

And He is my G-d, my living G-d.  
to Him I flee in time of grief,  
and He is my miracle and my refuge,  
who answers the day I shall call.

To Him I commit my spirit,  
in the time of sleep and awakening,  
even if my spirit leaves,  
G-d is with me, I shall not fear.

**Adon Olam**

Date	1987
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	Cantor (Tenor), Choir, and Congregation in Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Joyously
Meter	4/4
Form	Strophic; 4 verses
Length	55 measures
Liturgical Use	See pages 202-203
Text	See pages 202-203

## **Bar'chu et Adonai**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not Indication
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-Easy
Voicing	Cantor (Tenor) and Choir
Range	High tessitura for Cantor
Tempo	Gently
Meter	4/4
Form	ABA
Length	38 measures
Liturgical Use	Torah Blessing (before)

### **Additional information**

Prayer Book pages 280 and 282. The segue leads right into Sh'ma. The congregation says the blessing and the cantor will sing the last line. Then the congregation says the second blessing and the cantor sings the last line, and the congregation will sing the Sh'ma together.

### **Text**

*Bar'chu et adonai Ham'vorach*

*Baruch Adonai Ham'vorach l'olam va'ed*

Praise the One to whom our praise is due!

Praised be the One to whom our praise is due, now and for ever!

## Hashivenu

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	Unison
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	9 measures
Liturgical Use	Sung as the Torah is returned to the ark, part of the Etz Hayim, concluding the second Torah procession.

### Text

*Hashivenu hashivenu adonai, elecha, ve-na-shuva venashuva--- chadesh, chadesh yameinu kekedem.*

Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.

## **Kaddish Shalem** [Final Kaddish]

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not Indication
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Not indicated
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	17 measures
Liturgical Use	A hymn of praise to God found in the Jewish prayer service. Other Information The central theme of the Kaddish is the magnification and sanctification of God's name. In the liturgy different versions of the Kaddish are used functionally as separators between sections of the service. The final is recited on two special occasions: when making a siyum upon the completion of a tractate of Talmud or an order of Mishna, and at a funeral.

### Text

*Amein. Y'hay sh'may raba m'vorach l'olamul'ol'may ol'ma-yuh yis-buh-raych.*

May His great name be blessed forever and for all eternity.

## **Kiddush**

Date	1995
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	No indication
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	High tessitura for soprano and Cantor
Tempo	Forte e Maestoso, Grazioso,
Meter	2/4 (mixed at the end)
Form	Verse and Refrain
Length	68 measures
Liturgical Use	Blessing over the wine and sanctification of Shabbat

### Text

Baruch atah, Adonai  
Eloheinu, Melech Haolam,  
borei p'ri hagafen.

Baruch atah, Adonai  
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu,  
v'Shabbat kodsho  
b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu,  
zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit.  
Ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh,  
zecher litziat Mitzrayim.

Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta,  
mikol haamim.  
V'Shabbat kodsh'cha  
b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu.  
Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadeish HaShabbat.

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe  
who finding favor with us, sanctified us with mitzvot.  
In love and favor, You made the holy Shabat our heritage  
as a reminder of the work of Creation.  
As first among our sacred days, it recalls the Exodus from Egypt.  
You chose us and set us apart from the peoples.  
In love and favor You have given us Your holy Shabbat as an inheritance.  
Praise to You, Adonai, who sanctifies Shabbat.



## **L' Cha Dodi**

Date	1982
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	In memory of David
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Moderately-difficult
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Grazioso e Allegretto
Meter	6/8 and 3/4
Form	Verse and Refrain
Length	Various with repeats
Liturgical Use	A mystical prayer written by Rabbi Shelomo Halevi Alkabets in Tzafat, Israel in the middle ages. It compares the Sabbath to a bride coming to meet her groom. People would go out into the fields and dance Shabbat in singing these words. During the singing of this, the whole congregation turns to face the door of the sanctuary to greet the Shabbat bride. It is an acrostic, with the first letter of each paragraph spelling out the author's name.

### **Text**

Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Shamor v'zachor b'dibur echad,  
Hishmi'anu el ha'meyuchad.  
Adonai echad u'shmo echad;  
L'shem ul'tiferet v'l'tehila.

Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Likrat Shabbat l'chu v'nelcha,  
Ki hi m'kor ha'bracha.  
Me'rosh mi'kedem n'sucha;  
Sof ma'aseh b'mach'shava t'chila.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Mikdash melech, ir m'lucha,  
Kumi, tze'i mi'toch ha'hafecha.  
Rav lach shevet b'emek ha'bacha;  
V'hu yachmol alai'yich chemla.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Hitna'ari me'afar kumi,  
Livshi bigdei tifartech ami.  
Al yad ben Yishai beit haLachmi;  
Karva el nafshi g'ala.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Hit'oreri, hit'oreri,  
Ki va orech, kumi uri.  
Uri, uri, shir daberu;  
K'vod Adonai alai'yich nigla.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Lo tevoshi v'lo tikalmi,  
Mah tishtochachi uma tehemu.  
Bach yechemu ani'yei ami;  
V'niv'neta ir al tila.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

V'hayu lim'shisa sosai'yich,  
V'rachaku kol m'valai'yich.  
Yasis alai'yich Elohai'yich;  
Kimsos chatan al kala.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Yamin u'smol tifrotzi,  
V'et Adonai ta'aritzu.  
Al yad ish ben Partzi;  
V'nism'cha v'nagila!  
Rise, and face the rear of the shul.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Bo'i v'shalom, ateret ba'ala,  
Gam b'simcha uv' tzhala.  
Toch emunei am segula; Bo'i chala, bo'i chala.  
Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat n'kabelah!

Come, my friend, the Bride to meet,  
The holy Shabbat let us now greet.

“Keep” and “Remember” in one Divine word.  
Our people at Sinai His command heard.  
Our God is one; and One is His name,  
His is the glory, His is the fame!

To greet Shabbat now let us go!  
Source of blessing, it has ever been so.  
Conceived before life on earth began,  
Last in God's work, first in His plan.

Yerushalayim, Shrine of our King,  
Arise from your ruins, arise and sing.  
Enough have you dwelled in the vale of tears,  
Your God will mercifully dispel your fears.

Shake off your dust, arise from the mire;  
Dress, my people, in your proudest attire.  
Through a descendant of David, the poet-King,  
Redemption and freedom God will bring

Arise, arise, for your light has come,  
The dawn has broken, the night is gone.  
Awake, awake, and joyously sing;  
Heavenly glory to you He did bring.

Be not ashamed, be not distressed,  
No longer bowed down like a city oppressed.  
In you shall your children's hopes be fulfilled;  
Out of your ashes you will again be rebuilt.

They who despoiled you will themselves be despoiled,  
Your foes will be routed, their plots will be foiled.  
In you will your God find joy and pride,  
Loving you as a bridegroom loves his bride.

In every way may you prosper and grow;  
Reverence for God may you ever know.  
May you see the redemption that He will bring;  
Songs of thanksgiving to Him may you sing.

Come now, Shabbat, the day divine,  
Come in joy, let your brightness shine.  
Come to the people which greets you with pride,  
Come in peace, Shabbat Bride.

## Ma Tovv

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	SATB and Cantor (Tenor)
Range	Standard
Tempo	Quarter = 56
Meter	2/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	89 measures
Liturgical Use	A prayer said upon entering the synagogue and before putting on the tallit. It extols the beauty of entering God's sanctuary.
Text	Numbers 24:5 and Psalms 5:8, 26:8, 95:6, and 69:14.

*Ma tovu ohalekha Ya'akov, mishk'notekha Yisra'el.*

*Va'ani b'rov hasd'kha, avo veytekha, eshtahaveh el heikhal kodsh'kha b'yir'atekha.*

*Adonai, ahavti m'on beitekha um'kom mishkan k'vodekha.*

*Va'ani eshtakhaveh ve'ekhra'ah, avar'kha lifnei Adonai osi.*

*Va'ani t'filati l'kha Adonai et ratzon, Elohim b'rov hasdekha aneini be'emet yish'ekha.*

How great are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! As for me, through Your abundant grace, I enter your house to worship with awe in Your sacred place. O Lord, I love the House where you dwell, and the place where your glory tabernacles. I shall prostrate myself and bow; I shall kneel before the Lord my Maker. To You, Eternal

One, goes my prayer: may this be a time of your favor. In Your abundant love, O God, answer me with the Truth of Your salvation.

## **Mi Chamocha**

Date	1995
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Voicing	SATB and Cantor (Tenor)
Range	Standard
Tempo	Dolce e Espressivo, Misterioso,
Meter	4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	32 measures
Liturgical Use	For evening service.

### **Additional Information**

Supposedly sung by Miriam, it's the prayer we use praising God for taking us through the Red Sea and escaping slavery. Part of this is used at every service, but this setting is the Friday night version.

### **Text**

*Mi Chamochah ba-eilim, Adonai!*  
*Mi kamochah nedar bakodesh,*  
*Nora t'hilot, oseih fele!*

*Malchut'cha ra-u vanecha,*  
*Bokei-a yam lifnei Moshe uMiryam.*  
*Zeh Eli, anu v'amru,*

*Adonai yimloch l'olam va-ed!*

*V'ne-emar: ki fadah Adonai et Yaakov,  
Ug-alo miyad chazak mimenu.  
Baruch atah, Adonai, gall Yisrael.*

Who is like you, O God,  
Among the gods that are worshipped?  
Who is like You, majestic in holiness,  
Awesome in splendor, working wonders?

Your children witnessed Your sovereignty,  
The sea splitting before Moses and Miriam.  
“This is our God!” they cried.  
“Adonai will reign forever and ever!”

Thus it is said,  
“Adonai redeemed Jacob,  
from a hand stronger than his own.”  
Praised are You, Adonai, for redeeming Israel.



## **Na-arits'cho**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Appears a cappella, most likely accompanied because of congregation part.
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	SATB, Hazzan, and Congregation
Range	Congregation is asked to sing G5.
Tempo	Spirited
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Verse and Refrain
Length	74 measures
Liturgical Use	See below.

### **Additional information**

Prayer Book page 432. Sim Shalom Siddur—This is the beginning of the Kedushah section of the Amidah prayer in the Mussaf “additional” service. At the end of the Torah service, most synagogues do the sermon. Immediately following, the Cantor will sing the Hatzi Kaddish which segues right into the Mussaf service, which begins with the Amidah prayer. This would be like the Sanctus in a mass.

### **Text**

We revere and hallow You on earth as Your name is hallowed in heaven, where it is sung by celestial choirs as in Your prophet's vision. The angels called one to another.

*Kadosh kadosh kadosh Adonai tzeva'ot, m'lo khol ha-aretz k'vodo. Holy, holy, holy Adonai tzeva'ot. The whole world is filled with His glory.*

His glory fills the universe. When one angelic chorus asks, "Where is His glory?" another responds with praise:

*Barukh k'vod Adonai mi-m'komo.*  
Praise is the Lord's glory through the universe.

May He turn in compassion, granting mercy to His people who twice daily, morning and evening, proclaim His oneness with love:

*Sh'ma yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai ehad.*  
Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One.

He is our God and our Father; He is our King and our Redeemer. And in His mercy again will He declare, before all the world:

*Ani Adonai Eloheikhem.* I am the Lord your God.

And thus sang the Psalmist:

*Yimlokh Adonai l'olam, Elohayikh tziyon l'dor va-dor. Halleluyah.*

The Lord shall reign through all generations; your God, Zion, shall reign forever. Halleluyah.

## **Shabbat Schacharit Kaddish**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Unknown
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Alternates between 4/4 and 2/4
Form	ABA
Length	19 measures

### **Liturgical Use**

Prayer Book pg. 392. Final prayer of the Shacharit Shabbat morning service. Shacharit is like Morning Prayer, it segues right into the Torah service. This prayer is the full Kaddish, ending the first part of the service, going into part two.

### **Text**

Ye-he' she-meh' ra-ba' me-va-rach' le-a-lam'  
ul-al-mei' al-ma-ya'. Yit-ba-rach' ve-yish-ta-bach' ,

will be name His great blessed to eternity  
and to eternities of eternities will be blessed and will be praised

## **Sheve B'rachot**

Date	2003
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	for Paulette and Jeremy
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Piano
Phase	IV – Blended
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Dolce e suave
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	94 measures
Liturgical Use	The seven wedding blessings, sung at a wedding service.

### **Text**

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, bo'rei p'ri ha-gafen*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam shehakol bara lichvodo.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, Who has created everything for your glory.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, yotzer ha-adam.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, Creator of Human Beings.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher yatzar et ha-adam b'tzalmo, b'tzelem d'mut tavnito, v'hitkin lo mimenu binyan adei ad. Baruch atah Adonai, yotzeir ha-adam.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, Who has fashioned human beings in your image, according to your likeness and has fashioned from it a lasting mold. Blessed are You Adonai, Creator of Human Beings.

*Sos tasis v'tageil ha-akara b'kibutz baneha l'tocha b'simcha. Baruch atah Adonai, m'sameach Tzion b'vaneha.*

Bring intense joy and exultation to the barren one (Jerusalem) through the ingathering of her children amidst her in gladness. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who gladdens Zion through her children.

*Sameiach tesamach re'im ha-ahuvim k'sameichacha y'tzircha b'gan eden mikedem. Baruch ata Adonai, m'sameiach chatan v'chalah.*

Gladden the beloved companions as You gladdened Your creatures in the garden of Eden. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who gladdens groom and bride.

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher bara sason v'simcha chatan v'kallah, gilad rinah ditzah v'chedvah, ahavah v'achavah v'shalom v'reut. M'hera Adonai Eloheinu yishammah b'arei Yhudah uv-chutzot Y'rushalayim kol sason v'kol simcha, kol chatan v'kol kalah, kol mitzhalot chatanim meichupatam u-n'arim mimishte n'ginatam. Baruch ata Adonai, m'sameiach chatan im hakalah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, Who created joy and gladness, groom and bride, mirth, glad song, pleasure, delight, love, brotherhood, peace, and companionship. Adonai, our God, let there soon be heard in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the grooms' jubilation from their canopies and of the youths from their song-filled feasts. Blessed are You Who causes the groom to rejoice with his bride.

### **Shochen Ad #1**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Unknown
Phase	III - Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	Unison for Choir and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	4 measures

#### **Liturgical Use**

Prayer Book pg. 336 (Based on Isaiah 57:15)

Prayer is recited toward the end of Pesukei Dezimra during the Shacharit service of Shabbat and Yom Tov, and during the Passover Seder in the Ashkenazic tradition. On Shabbat Shochen Ad marks the beginning of the service for the chazzan of the Shacharit. This is a sign of God's creation of the world during the other six days of the week, followed by Shabbat being a day of rest.

#### **Text**

*Shochen Ad Marom V'Kadosh Sh'mo*

*He Who abides forever or He Who dwells in eternity*

**Shuvu, Shuvu** [from “Ata Hivdalta” in N’ilah]

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	I – Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Choral/vocal parts are easy; organ difficult
Voicing	SATB with divisi and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Maestoso, Freely, Andantino, Allargando
Meter	Mixed
Form	Through-composed
Length	40 measures
Liturgical Use	Prayers in the final service (Ne’ilah) on Yom Kippur.
Text	Ezekiel 33:11, 18:23, 18:32

“...turn ye, O turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?”

“Do I desire the death of the wicked? Saith the Lord God. Do I not prefer that he turn from his ways and live?” For it is written:

“For I do not desire anyone’s death,” saith the Lord God, “only that ye turn and then live!”

## **Torah Service**

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	50 measures
Liturgical Use	Torah Service

From the Milken Archive

The common designation “Torah service” refers to the section of the synagogue worship format that encompasses the readings or cantillations of portions of the Holy Scriptures, as assigned by the Hebrew calendar: the Torah and the haftara—or excerpts from the biblical Prophets—together with their accompanying b’rakhot. The Torah service also includes the surrounding introductory and concluding liturgy in connection with removing the Torah scroll(s) from the ark and replacing them. These occasions include all Sabbath, Festival, High Holy Day, and weekday Rosh Hodesh (the New Month) morning services, as well as the Sabbath afternoon service (minḥa l’shabbat). In some Reform congregations, especially those that do not—or are unable to—conduct viable Sabbath morning services, a Torah service is included within the Sabbath eve service. This remains a matter of choice by individual congregations.



Most of the Torah service liturgy is drawn from various books and verses of the Hebrew Bible. A few elements have their origins in sources such as the Zohar and various liturgical authors.

In traditional morning synagogue services, the Torah service in effect punctuates the shaharit (morning) and mussaf (“additional”) services and liturgies. It commences following the cantor’s intoned repetition of the communally and silently recited shaharitamida—the statutory core liturgy—and its culminating kaddish recitation (the full kaddish version, or kaddish shalem). Indeed, among the functions of kaddish recitations are their roles as conclusions to services and as dividers between liturgical sections. In most prayerbooks, however, the Torah service appears as the final part or at the end of the shaharit service. In Reform practice—which early on eliminated mussaf and in its place incorporated some of its elements into the single morning service for Sabbaths, Festivals, and High Holy Days—the abridged and partially revised Torah service traditionally occurs just prior to the sermon and the conclusion of worship.

#### Text

*Ein ka-mo'-cha va-e-lo-him', Adonai,*  
there is not/none like You among the powers, Adonai,

*ve-ein' ke- ma-a-sei'-cha. Mal-chut-cha' mal-chut'*  
and there is none like works Your. kingship Your (is) a kingship (of)

*kol o-la-mim' u-mem-shal-te-cha' be-chol' dor va-dor'.*  
all eternities and government Your in all generation and generation

*Adonai me'-lech, Adonai ma-lach', Adonai yim-loch'*  
Adonai (is) King, Adonai reigned, ruled, Adonai will reign, rule

*le-o-lam' va-ed'. Adonai oz le-a-mo' yi-ten',*  
to eternity and forever. Adonai strength to people His will give,

*Adonai ye-va-rech' et a-mo' va-sha-lom'.*  
Adonai will bless (d.o.) people His with the peace.

*Av ha-ra-cha-mim', hei-ti'-vah vi-re-tson-cha'*  
Father of the Mercies, doing good to with will Your

*et tzi-on' ; tiv-neh' cho-mot' ye-ru-sha-la'-yim . (d.o.)*  
Zion; You will build walls (of) Jerusalem .

*Ki ve-cha' le-vad' ba-tach'-nu, Me'-lech El*  
Because in You alone, only we trust, rely on King G-d

*ram ve-ni-sa', A-don' o-la-mim'.*

high and exalted, lifted up, Ruler, Possessor (of) worlds, eternities.

*Va-ye-hi' bin-so'-a ha-a-ron' va-yo'-mer mo-sheh', ku-mah'*

and it was as travelled the Ark (and) said Moses arise

*Adonai ve-ya-fu'-tzu oy-vei'-cha ve-ya-nu'-su me-san-ei'-cha*

Adonai and will scatter enemies Your and will flee ones who hate You

*mi-pa-ne'-cha. Ki mi-tzi-on' te-tse' To-rah',*

from presence Your. for from Zion will go out Torah, teaching, instruction

*u-de-var' Adonai miy-ru-sha-la'-yim.*

and word of Adonai from Jerusalem

*Ba-ruch' she-na-tan' To-rah' le-a-mo' yis-ra-el'*

blessed (is) One Who gave Torah to people His Israe

*bi-ke-du-sha-to'.*

in holiness His.

## V'al Kulam

Date	1986
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	for Aviya
Score	Engraved
Published	No
Instrumentation	Orchestra (Flute, Oboe, 2 Clarinets in Bb, Bassoon, 2 Horns in F, String Compliment, Timpani, Harp) [Orchestra by Joseph Ness]
Phase	I – Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Voicing	SATB and Tenor Solo (Cantor)
Range	Soprano, Tenor, and Tenor Solo high tessitura
Tempo	Not indicated
Meter	3/4 and 4/4
Form	Verse and Refrain
Length	44 measures

### Liturgical Use

A hymn to the God of forgiveness from Yom Kippur service; sung several times interspersed between some spoken prayers. it is.

### Text

*V'al kulam, Yisbarach v'yitromam shimecha*  
For all you do, may Your Name be continually blessed and exalted;

*Malkeinu tamid l'olam va'ed.*  
You are our King, now and forever, world without end.

*V'chol ha chayim yodecha, selah!*  
May all living creatures give thanks to You, selah!

*V'ihalelu et shim'cha be'emet.*  
and in truth praise You always

*Ha'Ek y'shuateinu v'ezrateinu, selah.*  
O G-d, our salvation and our help forever, selah!

*Baruch Atah HaShem Ha Tov shim'cha*  
Blessed art Thou, HaShem, Your very Name radiates goodness;

*u'lecha naeh l'hodot.*  
And to give thanks to You is just and fitting!

**V'ha ya**

Date	1984
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Not indicated
Phase	I – post-Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Difficult
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Quarter = 80
Meter	Not indicated
Form	Through-composed
Length	12 measures

**Liturgical Use**

Prayer Book pg. 322 or 511. The end of the Aleinu prayer, “God shall be acknowledged King of the earth. On that day, the Lord shall be One and His name One.” The Aleinu prayer is like the Credo. This is the final line.

Text                      Zechariah 14:9

V'haya Adonai, l'melech al kol ha'arets. Bayom hahu, yihyeh Adonai echad u'shemo echad.

And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; In that day shall the LORD be One, and His name one.

## **Vaanachnu**

Date	1984
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Not indicated
Phase	III – Conservative
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Dolce e andante
Meter	3/4
Form	ABA
Length	31 measures

### **Liturgical Use**

Second sentence in the Aleinu prayer. During this prayer, the assembly is standing, but bends the knee and bows until the word “u-modim” and rise. The Aleinu was written during the middle ages when Jews were persecuted by Christians and the Jews wrote this in response because praying to Jesus was a heresy to us, and the original prayer has some harsh language saying heretics would be killed.

### **Text**

*Va'anachnu korim, u'mishtachavim, u'modim,*  
But we bow in worship and thank

*lifnei melech, malchei ham'lachim,*  
the Supreme King of kings,

*hakadosh baruch Hu.*  
the Holy One, Blessed be He

## Vay'hi Binson Haaron

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	for David
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Not indicated
Phase	I - Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Voicing	SATB
Range	Standard
Tempo	Alla Marcia
Meter	Mixed-meter
Form	Through-composed
Length	49 measures
Liturgical Use	Opening of the Ark Prayer

### Text

*Va-y'hi binsoa ha-aron, va-yomer moshe: kumah Adonai v'yafutzu oyvekha, v'yanusu m'sanekha mi-panekha.*

As the ark was carried forward, Moses would say: ADONAI rise up and scatter Your foes, so that Your enemies flee Your presence.

*Ki mi-tziyon teitzei torah, u-dvar Adonai mirushalayim. Barukh she-natan Torah l'amo yisrael bikdushato.*

Torah shall go forth from Zion, and the word of ADONAI from Jerusalem. Praised is the one who gave Torah to the people Israel in holiness.



## Yaale Yishenu

Date	Undated
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	Not indicated
Score	Manuscript
Published	No
Instrumentation	Not indicated
Phase	I – Neoclassic
Level of Difficulty	Moderate
Voicing	SATB and Cantor
Range	Standard choral parts; High tessitura for Cantor
Tempo	Sempre dolce
Meter	3/4 and 4/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	35 measures

### Liturgical Use

From the Kol Nidre service (evening before Yom Kippur), last paragraph of the prayer.

### Text

*Ya'aleh yish'enu me'erev,*  
May our salvation rise from evening,

*veyavo tahorenu miboker,*  
our cleansing come from morning,

*veyera'eh chinunenu ad arev.*  
our prayer appear until dusk.

**Yih'yu l'ratson**

Date	1977 (II) 1977 (III) 1984 (unnumbered) 2005 (unnumbered)
Archive Listing	Not listed
Dedication	1977 (II) – In The Memory of My Mother 1977 (III) – Not indicated 1984 (unnumbered) – Not indicated 2005 (unnumbered) – for Bar Mitzvah of Daniel Charrow
Score	Engraved; Except 1894
Published	No
Instrumentation	Organ/Keyboard
Phase	III – Conservative (elements of Neo-Classic harmony)
Level of Difficulty	Easy
Voicing	1977 (II) – Treble Solo 1977 (III) - SA 1984 (unnumbered) – Unison Chorus 2005 (unnumbered) – Soprano Solo
Range	Standard
Tempo	Not indicated; Except 1984 – Affettuoso e affannoso
Meter	1977 (II) – Mixed 1977 (III) – 3/4 1984 (unnumbered) – 3/4 2005 (unnumbered) – 3/4
Form	Through-composed
Length	31 measures

## Liturgical Use

Setting of the text “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable...” Used as a meditation following the Amidah prayer.

### Text

Yih'-yu l'-ra-tzon im-rei fi, im-rei fi  
V'-heg-yon li-bi l'-fa-ne-cha  
A-do-nai, tzu-ri, A-do-nai  
Tzu-ri v'-go-a-li, v'-go-a-li  
May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
Adonai, my Rock and my Redeemer.

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At the date of this project, Cantor Lefkowitz (retired) from Park Avenue Synagogue, indicates there are more Jewish compositions than are discussed in this chapter. He is in the process of collecting those manuscripts. Perhaps there might be a future publication on his complete Jewish *oeuvre* at a later date.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this document was threefold: to bring about a greater awareness of McNeil Robinson as a choral musician; to expose the choral music of Robinson by providing an overview of his total choral output in both the Christian and Jewish traditions; and to provide an exploration of his compositional style. This document's goal was to contribute to the research already conducted on Robinson, serving as a complement to the work of F. Anthony Thurman, Kyle Babin, and Andrew Yeargin.

It is my hope that the purposes and goals of this document have been fulfilled. Robinson's personal musical journey, his teachings, contributions to sacred music in the United States, and the choral compositions and others, deserve to be recognized and included in the canon of Western Music. Robinson was part of a circle of fine musicians, many of whom are considered pillars of twentieth and twenty-first century music. I, too, would like to see him recognized with those that were in his circle.

His personality can be described best by James Thomashower, Executive Director of the American Guild of Organist:

“McNeil Robinson will be remembered for his larger than life personality, his broad sense of humor, and his flair for the dramatic. Highly opinionated often to the delight of his devoted students, his speech was colorful and sometimes

caustic. Neil smoked like a chimney and could both charm people or offend them with equal ease. He greatly enjoyed holding court and could do so in the back of a recital hall or in the front of a restaurant. He had a very generous spirit and supported the art of improvisation by underwriting the first-place prize of the AGO's National Competition in Organ Improvisation for many years. In addition to being a masterful musician, skilled improvisateur, teacher, and composer, he was a man who lived his life with gusto and didn't suffer fools or incompetence lightly. Invariably there were some people who preferred to steer clear of him, but there were always countless others who were drawn inexorably into his circle. Although he was physically slight in stature, there was a grandiosity about his approach to the world. He said and did outrageous things and got away with them because of his charismatic personality and the twinkle in his blue eyes.”<sup>50</sup>

I didn't have the pleasure of knowing Robinson but have come to know him through both his music and those to whom he shared both personal and professional relationships with. May this document bring about a deeper awareness of his choral music both for the Christian and Jewish traditions.

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<sup>50</sup> Creaghan, Christopher. Interview by author, 23 November 2016, Columbia, SC

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## APPENDIX A – SUPPLEMENTARY FILE LIST

### **Supplementary File No. 1 – Catalogue of Works**

- Organ Solo
- Organ and Orchestra
- Choral
- Mass Settings
- Jewish
- Solo Voice
- Hymn Tunes
- Responsorial Psalms
- Other
- Sketches, Incomplete Scores

*Catalogue compiled by Christopher Creaghan for the Estate of McNeil Robinson, II.  
Edits and the additions of Jewish Music by Jason A. Wright. All rights reserved.*

### **Supplementary File No. 2 – Memorial Service Bulletin**

Bulletin from McNeil Robinson's Memorial Service on October 13, 2015. The service on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 was held at The Church of the Ascension New York City, NY.

### **Supplementary File No. 3 – Memorial Service Video**

Video of Memorial Service of McNeil Robinson II, featuring his own musical compositions.

### **Supplementary File No. 4 – New York City American Guild of Organists Video**

Video of an interview with McNeil Robinson; interviewed by Stephen Tharp. The interview took place on Monday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

*Supplementary Files No. 3 & No. 4 are included by permission from James Kennerley.*

### **Supplementary File No. 5 – Audio of Jewish Music Interview**

Audio of the interview with McNeil Robinson; interviewed by Louis Weingarden. The interview took place in November 4, 1985.

*Supplementary Files No. 5 is included by permission from Mark Slobin and the Estate of McNeil Robinson, II.*

**Supplementary File No. 6 – Wright Lecture-Recital: The Choral Music of McNeil Robinson.**

The Lecture-Recital was conducted by Jason A. Wright. The recital took place on Saturday, January 14, 2017 at St. Paul's Parish, Washington, DC.

## APPENDIX B – ROBINSON ARCHIVE INVENTORY LIST

		Box 1
Collection (Group, Fonds)	I.	Descriptive Information
Papers Manuscript Groups	II.	"Papers," Manuscript Groups 1. Photo 5. Correspondence
		Box 2
		6A. Concert/Recital Programs: Performances by Robinson 6B. Concert/Recital Programs: Performances Robinson-Premiers
		Box 3
		6C. Recital/Concert Programs: Recitals in which Robinson participated 6D. Recital/Concert Programs: Recital/Concert Programs: Performances of composer's music by others 6E. Recital/Concert Programs: Performances by others
		Box 4
		8A. Announcements/Reviews: Announcements of Performances (and Jewish items) 8B. Announcements/Reviews: Reviews of recitals by Robinson 8C. Announcements/Reviews: Announcements/Reviews of publications 8D. Announcements/Reviews: Announcements/Reviews of Recordings
		Box 5
		9. Brochures/Posters 10. Teaching: Improvisation Teaching Notes 11. References to Robinson 12. Events Composer/Performer participated in and/or organized
		Box 6
Series File Document	III	Music by Composer, Manuscript Groups 1. Organ Music Manuscripts (OMS 1-8) 2. Organ Music Published (OPUB 1-5)
		Box 7
		5. Organ and Instruments, Manuscripts (O-INST-MS 1-3)
		Box 8
		7. Choral (General) Manuscripts (CMS 1-22) 8. Choral (General) Published (CPUB 1-8)
		Box 9
		7. Choral Mass Settings (CMS 23-35)
		Box 10
		7. Messe Solonnelle (CMS 31)
		Box 11
		10. Miscellaneous (Jewish, etc.) (JEW 1-8)
		Box 12
		7. Choral (Service Music) Manuscript (CMS 36-39) 7. Choral (Hymn Tunes) Manuscript (MS 40-55) 10. Vocal Solos VMS 1-19 V PUB 1
		Box 13
		19. Other (OTH 1-3) 20. Fragments (FRAG 1-10) 21. Varia (VAR 1-2)



## APPENDIX C – OBITUARY OF MCNEIL ROBINSON



McNeil Robinson died on Saturday, May 9, 2015 after a lengthy illness. A memorial service to be held in New York is being planned for the fall at a time and location to be announced.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, McNeil Robinson quickly developed a prodigious technique and repertoire as a pianist, studying at the Birmingham Conservatory. In his teenaged years he played with the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (now the Alabama Symphony Orchestra) on several occasions. Neil attended Birmingham Southern College as a scholarship student, and in 1962 came to New York City to study at the Mannes College of Music with Leonard Shure as a full scholarship student. He also studied piano privately with Rosina Lhevine and Beveridge Webster. In 1965 he entered Juilliard where he studied organ with Vernon de Tar and Anthony Newman, and composition with Vincent Persichetti.

In his DMA dissertation on the life and work of McNeil Robinson, our colleague Tony Thurman makes the following salient observation: "From early childhood, Robinson displayed an inexhaustible appetite for knowledge and learning. Even after graduation from The Juilliard School, he continued to study. Continuing education has always been a major focus in his life, even after having achieved international acclaim as a soloist, Robinson continued to seek out and interact with the major teachers and performing artists throughout the world."

In this vein McNeil continued his organ studies with George Faxon, the noted teacher in Boston, and Clarence Watters, the leading disciple of Marcel Dupré in this country at that time. He also continued his composition studies with Yehudi Wyner and Jacob Druckman in New York, and later Allen Forte at Yale. Even in his mature years he continued to coach with Russell Saunders and Catharine Crozier in this country, and Guy

Bovet and Monserrat Torrent in Europe. He was a fixture at AGO conventions and NYC Chapter workshops, anywhere he thought he might gain a new insight into a performance practice, something of historical interest or pedagogical advice. And in looking over those in attendance at such events he could be fairly disdainful of those who were *not* present who, in his estimation, could have used the information imparted—students and colleagues alike. He was not shy in expressing himself in his opinions, and needed not in the least any assertiveness training!

While still a student Neil gained two positions in New York that thrust his name into the front ranks of the profession: organist of Park Avenue Synagogue and organist of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. The music lists of each of these noted houses of worship indicate the early use of his compositions and there is much commentary about his prowess as an improviser. His 1970 recording of Dupré's *Vêpres du Commun* at St. Mary's earned him a letter of congratulations from the composer.

Neil came to the Park Avenue Synagogue in 1965 at the invitation of the famous Cantor David Putterman to whom he had been recommended by Leonard Bernstein and Jack Gottlieb, and he remained at Park Avenue Synagogue until he retired in 2012. He came to St. Mary's also in 1965 first as the assistant to James Palsgrove, assuming the directorship of the music program in 1974. He continued in that capacity until 1982. Prior to this time he served at Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, even sharing duties there during his early years at St. Mary's.

As his renown as a performer and improviser increased, prospective students began to seek out McNeil Robinson, and his teaching career began to increase, especially after he left the rigorous liturgical schedule at St. Mary the Virgin. As his private studio increased, he also assumed a faculty position at Mannes. In 1984 at the invitation of John Walker, he joined the faculty of Manhattan School of Music, later becoming chair of the organ department after John moved to Pittsburgh in 1991, a position which Neil held at the time of his death. During this era he taught a succession of students who have gone on to significant careers of their own, and who have won numerous competitions and prizes. A tribute on the web site of the American Guild of Organists notes that he taught more winners of the AGO Improvisation Competition than anyone else.

As a composer his work continued to be performed in venues throughout the world, including several national conventions of the AGO, where his organ concerto was first performed at the National Convention in San Francisco in 1984. His liturgical compositions regularly find their place in the music lists of Roman Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant houses of worship throughout the country. After St. Mary the Virgin, Neil's church career trajectory took him to a lengthy tenure at Park Avenue Christian Church, and later Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, from which he retired only last fall.

Throughout the history of music there have been notable exceptional masters of the musical art who were equally gifted and proficient in the complimentary disciplines of performance, improvisation, composition, and pedagogy. Clearly McNeil Robinson was one such master musician whose life and work happily intersected with our own here in the New York City Chapter.

## APPENDIX D – SUBMITTED IMPROVISATION THEMES

From the McNeil Robinson Collection reproduced courtesy of the Leupold Archive and the Estate of McNeil Robinson II. All rights reserved.

### Theme by Dominick Argento

*Mosso*

(*"Casanova's Homecoming"*)

*For McNeil Robinson,  
with admiration  
Dominick Argento 16.XI.82*

*Xon*

### Theme by Lukas Foss

*Foss*

*foss*

*foss*

*to the*

*foss*

# Theme by Charles Wuorinen

164.100 P. 16.10.10

Theme in Mode Chromatico ad Thematicum  
Sancti Spiritus, Adagio

1.24 Portance

(C. 16.10.10)

16.10.10

# Theme by Vladimir Ussachevsky

For much-admired organist and friend McNeil Robinson II

Lyric Theme Andante  $\text{♩} = 100-104$

mp

mf

optional (p)

Contrasting theme. (hopefully complementary!)

$\text{♩} = 84$  *Falst*

mf

*pin f* *sub meno f*

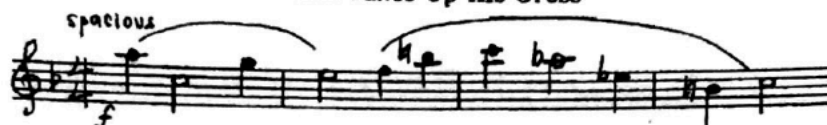
Vladimir Ussachevsky

## The Stations of the Cross, themes by Ned Rorem

### THE FIRST STATION: Jesus Is Condemned To Death



### THE SECOND STATION: Jesus Takes Up His Cross



### THE THIRD STATION: Jesus Falls The First Time



### THE FOURTH STATION: Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother



### THE FIFTH STATION: The Cross Is Laid On Simon Of Cyrene



### THE SIXTH STATION: Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus



### THE SEVENTH STATION: Jesus Falls A Second Time



**THE EIGHTH STATION: Jesus Meets The Women Of Jerusalem**



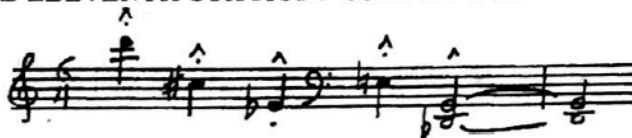
**THE NINTH STATION: Jesus Falls A Third Time**



**THE TENTH STATION: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Garments**



**THE ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross**



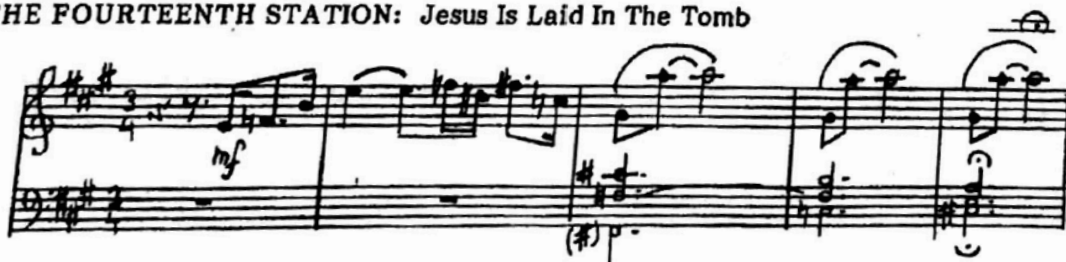
**THE TWELFTH STATION: Jesus Dies On The Cross**



**THE THIRTEENTH STATION: The Body of Jesus Is Placed In The Arms Of His Mother**



THE FOURTEENTH STATION: Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb



NED ROREM  
15 JANUARY 1989

APPENDIX E – PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE  
COMMISSIONS AND PREMIERES

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COMPOSITIONS OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC  
 commissioned by and/or premiered at

THE PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE  
 ANNUAL LITURGICAL MUSIC SERVICES

1943 - 1983

Adler, Hugo Chaim	1943	KIDDUSH
Alexander, Haim (Heinz)	1949	BAREKHU
Amir, Nahum	1973	MIZMOR L'YISRAEL (Sabbath Eve Service)
Anram, David	1961	SHIR L'EREV SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Avshalomoff, Jacob	1948	PROPHECY (Isaiah 11:11-16)
Ben-Haim, Paul	1949	ADONAI MALAKH GEUT (Psalm 93)
Berezowsky, Nicolai	1946	LEMAAN TIZKERU
Berger, Arthur V.	1946	TOV LEHODOT (Psalm 92)
Berlinsky, Herman	1957	VESHAMRU
Berlinsky, Herman	1958	AVODAT SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Bernstein, Aviassaf	1949	AHAVAT OLAM
Bernstein, Leonard	1945	HASHKIVENU
Binder, A. W.	1945	KIDDUSH
Bloch, Ernest	1947	SILENT DEVOTION (organ prelude)
Bloch, Ernest	1947	MOURNER'S KADDISH (organ prelude)
Bloch, Suzanne	1948	BLESSED IS THE MATCH (Hana Senesch)
Brant, Henry	1945	ADONAI MALAKH GEUT (Psalm 93)
Brant, Henry	1948	CREDO FOR PEACE (Isaiah 11:2-4)
Brun, Herbert	1949	ORGAN SUITE: Prelude, Amidah, Kaddish, Benediction
Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario	1943	LEKHA DODI
Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario	1945	MI KHAMOKHA, MAY THE WORDS
Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario	1950	SACRED SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH EVE
Chajes, Julius	1945	ADONAI MALAKH TAGEL (Psalm 97)
Cines, Eugene	1977	TRUST IN THE LORD (Ahat Sha-alti -- from Psalm 27)

Davidson, Charles	1972	L'DAVID MIZMOR
Dessau, Paul	1943	BAREKHU-SHEMA YISRAEL
Dessau, Paul	1944	ALENU
Diamond, David	1944	MA TOVU
Diamond, David	1948	LONGING FOR JERUSALEM (Judah Halevi)
Diamond, David	1951	MIZMOR L'DAVID (Sabbath Eve Service)
Druckman, Jacob	1967	SHIR SHEL YAKOV (Sabbath Eve Service)
Foss, Lukas	1947	ADON OLAM
Freed, Isadore	1944	MAY THE WORDS
Freed, Isadore	1953	SACRED SERVICE FOR THE SABBATH EVE
Fromm, Herbert	1947	MAGEN AVOT
Geller, Isador	1946	BENEDICTION
Gideon, Miriam	1974	SHIRAT MIRIAM L'SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Goldman, Maurice	1980	SABBATH EVE SERVICE (Eastern Premiere)
Gottlieb, Jack	1965	SHIREI AHAVAH L'SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Gould, Morton	1947	HAMAARIV ARAVIM
Gorochoy, Yedidia	1948	LEKHA DODI
Gradenwitz, Peter	1949	VESHAMRU
Gretchaninoff, Alexandre	1943	ADONAI MALAKH TAGEL (Psalm 97)
Gretchaninoff, Alexandre	1944	TOV LEHODOT (Psalm 92)
Gruenthal, Joseph	1949	ALENU
Harris, Roy	1946	MOSHE UVNE YISRAEL-MI KHAMOKHA
Helfman, Max	1944	WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE
Helfman, Max	1947	BAREKHU-SHEMA YISRAEL
Helfman, Max	1948	MI KHAMOKHA
Helfman, Max	1981	VEAHAVTA, VESHAMRU, HATZI KADDISH (Shir V'kol Zimrah)
Jacobi, Frederick	1945	AHAVAT OLAM
Jacobi, Frederick	1947	ONEG SHABBAT (organ prelude)
Jacobi, Frederick	1952	ARVIT L'SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)

Kalib, Sholom	1983 ANA AVDA
Kaplan, Abraham	1977 MI KHAMOKHA
Kaplan, Abraham	1979 KIDDUSH
Kaplan, Abraham	1983 ARVIT LESHABAT (Premiere in service form)
Kaplan, Gadi	1982 TZUR YISRAEL, KADOSH, HATZI KADDISH
Kingsley, Gershon	1970 SHIRU LADONAI SHIR HADDASH (Sabbath Eve Service)
Kosakoff, Reuven	1960 LIKHVOD SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Landau, Siegfried	1956 A FRIDAY EVE SERVICE
Lavry, Marc	1949 MA TOVU
Lefkowitz, David	1982 VEZOT HATORAH (Torah Service)
Lefkowitz, David	1982 NIGUN TO WELCOME THE SABBATH
Lefkowitz, David	1983 ETZ HAYIM HI, EN KELOHENU (arr. A. Kaplan)
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1977 LEMAN YIRBU (accomp. by N. Robinson)
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1979 LEKHU NERANENA (SATB by L. Winter)
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1981 SHAHAR AVAKESH'KHA (introduction to Morning service)
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1983 ALENU (arr. A. Kaplan)
Levy, Ernst	1946 HATZI KADDISH
Levy, Marvin David	1964 SHIR SHEI MOSHE (Sabbath Eve Service)
Lustig, Moshe	1949 SHEMA YISRAEL
Meyerowitz, Jan	1962 SHIR HADASH L'SHABBAT (Sabbath Eve Service)
Milhaud, Darius	1944 BAREKHU-SHEMA YISRAEL
Milhaud, Darius	1945 HATZI KADDISH
Menasce, Jacques de	1947 LEKHA DODI
Moore, Douglas	1948 VAYEKHULU
Nardi, Naum	1949 KIDDUSH
Pisk, Paul A.	1946 MAY THE WORDS
Rapaport, Eda	1946 ORGAN PRELUDE
Robinson, Neil	1969 ORGAN SUITE: Prelude, Silent Prayers, Kaddish, Benediction
Robinson, Neil	1978 BAREKHU, SHEMA YISRAEL, SILENT PRAYER

Robinson, Neil	1982	LEKHA DODI, YIHEYU LERATZON
Rogers, Bernard	1947	THE LORD REIGNETH (Psalm 99)
Rosenthal, Laurence	1957	MA TOVU, YIGDAL
Rosowsky, Salomo	1947	LEMAAN TIZKERU
Salomon, Karl	1949	ADON OLAM
Schalit, Heinrich	1944	SHIRU LADONAI (Psalm 98)
Schlossberg, Ralph	1981	JOYFUL SABBATH! (Sabbath Morning Torah and Musaf)
Schlossberg, Ralph	1982	SHIRU LADONAI (Psalm 98)
Schonberg, Jakob	1948	VESHAMRU
Secunda, Sholom	1959	SHABBAT 'SHOLOM' (Sabbath Eve Service)
Smit, Leo	1947	VESHAMRU
Sowerby, Leo	1947	ALENU
Starer, Robert	1948	FAITH (Herzl's "The Jewish State")
Starer, Robert	1949	VAYEKHULU
Starer, Robert	1968	SABBATH EVE SERVICE
Still, William Grant	1946	MIZMOR LEDAVID (Psalm 29)
Tansman, Alexandre	1946	MA TOVU
Urstein, Carl	1983	TIKANTA SHABBAT
Weill, Kurt	1946	KIDDUSH
Weinberg, Jacob	1944	KIDDUSH
Weiner, Lazar	1971	LEKHU NERANENOH (Sabbath Eve Service)
Wohl, Yehuda H.	1949	MI KHAMOKHA
Wolpe, Stefan	1945	YIGDAL
Wyner, Yehudi	1963	SABBATH EVE SERVICE
Zilberts, Zavel	1945	BRAKHA M'EN SHEVA

Park Avenue Synagogue  
Fifty East Eighty-seventh Street  
New York City

(Addendum)

COMPOSITIONS OF SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

commissioned by and/or premiered at

THE PARK AVENUE SYNAGOGUE  
ANNUAL LITURGICAL MUSIC SERVICES

1984 - 1986

Gold, Morton	1984	THE DAYS OF JOY (excerpts)
Golden, Jonathan	1986	MUSAF KEDUSHAH (complete)
Golden, Jonathan	1986	ADON OLAM
Golden, Jonathan	1986	ATAH TA'ANEH (organ prelude)
Kalib, Sholom	1985	MA TOVU
Kopmar, Jerome	1986	SHEMA B'NI, SHIM'I VAT (for Bar/Bat Mitzvah)
Kopmar, Jerome	1986	SIM SHALOM
Kopmar, Jerome	1986	HASHKIVENU
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1985	MIKOLOT MAYIM RABIM (Psalm 93) arr: J. Golden
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1986	HODU LADONAI (Psalm 136) arr: J. Golden
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1986	MI KHAMOKHA (arr: D. Lefkowitz)
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1986	ADONAI MALAKH (Psalm 93) arr: J. Golden
Lefkowitz, Jacob	1986	KIDDUSH LESHABBAT (arr: D. Lefkowitz)
Robinson, Neil	1984	VAANAHNU, VEYAHYAH ADONAI (Alenu)
Robinson, Neil	1985	EN KAMOKHA, AV HARAHAMIM
Robinson, Neil	1985	MUSAF KEDUSHAH RESPONSES
Robinson, Neil	1985	V'AL KULAM
Robinson, Neil	1986	SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION (I Kings 8:28-29)
Schlossberg, Ralph	1985	KOL RINAH VISHUAH (complete Hallel: excerpts)

APPENDIX F – DEGREE RECITAL PROGRAMS OF  
JASON A. WRIGHT

# Across, the Vast Eternal Sky



## THE KERNER CHORALE

Spring Concert

May 8th, 2015

Main Street United Methodist Church

Kernersville, North Carolina

[www.thekernerchorale.org](http://www.thekernerchorale.org)



Candidacy Recital presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting

## **History of the Chorale**

The Kerner Chorale was founded in Kernersville, North Carolina during the Summer of 2011. Since then, the Chorale has gone through much growth and has evolved into a treasure for the Town of Kernersville. The Kerner Chorale is a full 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The Kerner Chorale seeks to continue this legacy by providing the area many future performances. The Chorale is made up of volunteers, who give of their time and talents in order to make the Chorale a better organization. The chorale seeks to go forward with this goal and continue to grow. We want the Kerner Chorale to become a musical staple for the greater Kernersville area, as well as the Piedmont-Triad.

The Kerner Chorale's mission is to serve and provide the greater Kernersville community with excellence in choral music performance. Our vision is to be the Town of Kernersville's choral society by providing individuals the opportunity to join, sing, and perform during the year for the greater Kernersville community and its residents.

---

## **Membership**

The great philosopher Plato said "music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." Music has traveled throughout time with humanity and affects us all so very much. Music inspires us all and in today's busy and hectic world many people look to it as an escape from the everyday. The Kerner Chorale seeks to be this oasis in the fast-paced race of life by providing Kernersville and the Piedmont-Triad area an outlet to partake in, and hear the richness of the art of choral music and the spirit it brings. Kernersville has a reputation of being a place where music and the arts are widely supported. The Kerner Chorale only enriches this legacy and helps to better the town in which we live.

Membership in The Kerner Chorale is open to anyone in the community with a love of choral music of various cultures, genres, and time periods.



## **The Kerner Singers**

Jason A. Wright, artistic director

Jonathan P. Emmons, collaborative accompanist

### **Eternal Light**

**Leo Sowerby**

Eternal Light, shine into our hearts, Eternal Goodness, deliver us from evil,  
Eternal Power, be our support, Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our  
ignorance, Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

–Alcuin of York (c. 735 – 804)

### **O magnum mysterium**

**Mortin Lauridsen**

*O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum  
natum, jacentem in præsepio. Beata virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum  
Christum, Alleluia!*

O great mystery and wondrous sacrament, that animals should see the newborn  
Lord lying in their manger. Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to  
bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

### **There Will Be Rest**

**Frank Ticheli**

There will be rest And sure stars shining There will be rest And sure stars  
shinning Over the rooftops Crowned with snow, A reign of rest, Serene  
forgetting, The music of stillness Holy and low There will be rest There will be  
rest And sure stars shining Over the rooftops Crowned with snow, A reign of  
rest Serene forgetting, The music of stillness Holy and low The music of stillness  
Serene forgetting The music of stillness Holy and low, Holy and low I will make  
this world of my devising I will make this world of my devising I will make this  
world out of a dream, Out of a dream (dream, dream, dream) In my lonely mind,  
I shall find the crystal of peace, I shall find the crystal of peace, I shall find the  
crystal of peace above me Above me, above me, above me Stars, Stars I shall find,  
Stars I shall find, I shall find the crystal of peace Stars I shall find.

### **The Road Home**

**Stephen Paulus**

Hannah Carter, soprano

Tell me, where is the road I can call my own, That I left, that I lost So long ago?  
All these years I have wandered, Oh when will I know There's a way, there's a  
road That will lead me home? After wind, after rain, When the dark is done, As I  
wake from a dream In the gold of day, Through the air there's a calling From far  
away, There's a voice I can hear That will lead me home. Rise up, follow me,

Come away, is the call, With the love in your heart As the only song; There is no  
such beauty As where you belong; Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

## **Sleep**

**Eric Whitacre**

The evening hangs beneath the moon, A silver thread on darken dune. With  
closing eyes and resting head I know that sleep is coming soon. Upon my pillow,  
safe in bed, A thousand pictures fill my head, I can-not sleep, my mind's a flight;  
and yet my limbs seem made of lead. If there are noises in the night, A  
frightening shadow, flickering light; As I surrender unto sleep, Where clouds of  
dream, give second sight. What dreams may come, both dark and deep, Of flying  
wings and soaring leap As I surrender unto sleep, Unto sleep, sleep.

## **Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zeboath!**

**Johannes Brahms**

*Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth! Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet  
sich nach den Vorhöfen des Herrn; mein Leib und Seele freuen sich in dem lebendigen  
Gott. Wohl denen, die in deinem Hause wohnen, die loben dich immerdar.*

How lovely are thy dwelling places, O Lord of Hosts! My soul requires and  
yearns for the courts of the Lord; My body and soul rejoice in the living God.  
Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they praise you forever.

The Kerner Singers are sponsored this evening by the Wright Family  
in memory of Ruby N. Wright (1942-2007)

## ***Interval***

### **The Kerner Chorale with The Kerner Singers**

Jason A. Wright, artistic director

Benjamin Blozan, collaborative accompanist

## **Sure On This Shining Night**

**Martin Lauridsen**

Sure on this shining night Of star made shadows round, Kindness must watch  
for me This side the ground. The late year lies down the north. All is healed, all is  
health. High summer holds the earth. Hearts all whole. Sure on this shining  
night I weep for wonder wand'ring far alone  
Of shadows on the stars.

## Fern Hill

John Corigliano

Levone Tobin-Scott, reader  
Clara O'Brien, mezzo soprano

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs About the lilting house  
and happy as the grass was green, The night above the dingle starry, Time let me  
hail and climb Golden in the heydays of his eyes, And honored among wagons I  
was prince of the apple towns And once below a time I lordly had the trees and  
leaves Trail with daisies and barley Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns About the happy yard  
and singing as the farm was home, In the sun that is young once only, Time let  
me play and be Golden in the mercy of his means, And green and golden I was  
huntsman and herdsman, the calves Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills  
barked clear and cold, And the Sabbath rang slowly  
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay Fields high as the house,  
the tunes from the chimneys, it was air And playing, lovely and watery And fire  
green as grass. And nightly under the simple stars As I rode to sleep the owls  
were bearing the farm away, All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables,  
the nightjars Flying with the ricks, and the horses Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white With the dew, come  
back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all Shining, it was Adam and maiden, The  
sky gathered again And the sun grew round that very day. So it must have been  
after the birth of the simple light In the first, spinning place, the spellbound  
horses walking warm Out of the whinnying green stable  
On to the fields of praise.

And honored among foxes and pheasants by the gay house Under the new made  
clouds and happy as the heart was long, In the sun born over and over, I ran my  
heedless ways, My wishes raced through the house high hay And nothing I  
cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows In all his tuneful turning so few  
and such morning songs Before the children green and golden  
Follow him out of grace.

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me Up to the  
swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand, In the moon that is always  
rising, Nor that riding to sleep I should hear him fly with the high fields And  
wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land. Oh as I was young and  
easy in the mercy of his means, Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

## **Across the Vast, Eternal Sky**

**Ola Gjeilo**

*(During the introduction, you are invited to name aloud anyone who has traveled across the vast, eternal sky)*

Sunlight shines on my face; This is my grace, to be Restored, born again, In flame. When I was young I flew in the velvet night; Shining by day, a firebird bathed in light! Grey now my feathers, which once were red and gold; My destiny to soar up to the sun Sunlight shines on my face; This is my grace, to be Restored, born again, In flame. Do not despair that I am gone away; I will appear again When the sunset paints Flames across the vast, eternal sky.

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## **Personnel**

### **The Kerner Singers**

Soprano	Hannah Carter, Clare Dellamea, Shelby Thiedeman, Jordan Winslow,
Alto	Megan Billups, Ashley Buffa, Ashley Earnhardt,
Tenor	Jesse Herdon, Derek Jackenheimer, Caleb Stack,
Bass	Derek Gracey, Wesley McCleary-Small, Randy Williams

### **The Kerner Chorale**

Soprano	Rheanell Baker, Clarrisa Davis, Trina Cleveland, Jodi McDonough, Emily Ward
Alto	Megan Billups, Sarah Hicks, Pat Hill, Julie Kelleher, Donna Kerns, Lisa Kommes, Lisa Swope
Tenor	Eldon Beard, Debra Hanson, Bruce Toepfer
Bass	Jim Billups, Fred Isaacson, Rick Ramsey, Nicholas Ruden, Ben Wagner

## Program Notes

**Leo Sowerby** was an American composer and church musician from Grand Rapids, Michigan, who composed in nearly all genres, including choral, orchestral, and other instrumental works. The final years of his career were spent at the Washington National Cathedral, where he founded the College of Church Musicians. **Eternal Light**, (1958) is a rich and beautiful setting of moving words by Alcuin (735-804), an English educator, theologian, and leading scholar at the court of Charlemagne. Sowerby highlights the text through a syllabic, speech-like setting with melodies that rise and fall with the natural shape of each phrase, and harmonies that are subtly jazz-inspired.

To quote the composer, "For centuries, composers have been inspired by the beautiful **O Magnum Mysterium** text ("O Great Mystery") depicting the birth of the newborn King amongst the lowly animals and shepherds. This affirmation of God's grace to the meek and the adoration of the Blessed Virgin are celebrated ... through a quiet song of profound inner joy." **Morton Lauridsen** (b. 1943), Professor of Composition at the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California, is noted for his many vocal works. *O Magnum Mysterium* has become one of the world's most performed and recorded compositions since its premiere in 1994 by the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

**Frank Ticheli**, like Morton Lauridsen and Eric Whitacre, two other contemporary composers featured in tonight's repertoire, writes choral music in a style sometimes described as a "modern madrigal," music whose structure and overall effect recall the lushness of Renaissance and Romantic choral music, but whose building blocks include tonal clusters and other harmonic elements alien to those older musical styles. "**There Will Be Rest**" is a setting of a haunting poem written by American poet Sara Teasdale shortly before her suicide in 1933. The poem opens with images of consolation, foreseeing "a reign of rest, serene forgetting, the music of stillness," lit by "sure stars." In time, though, the poem's vision darkens, as the poet resolves, "I will make this world of my devising out of a dream in my lonely mind."

**Stephen Paulus** has written over 150 works for chorus ranging from his Holocaust oratorio, *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, recorded by Minnesota Orchestra on the BIS label, to the poignant anthem, *Pilgrims' Hymn*, sung at the funerals of Presidents Reagan and Ford. His works have received thousands of performances and recordings from such groups as The New York Choral Society, L.A. Master Chorale, Robert Shaw Festival Singers, VocalEssence, Dale Warland Singers and countless others. The melody for **The Road Home** is from *The Lone Wild Bird*, an adaptation of the early

nineteenth century American song Prospect. Paulus found several texts based on this tune, none of them quite right for the slightly melancholy air of the melody, so he commissioned a new lyric from his longtime collaborator, poet Michael Dennis Browne. With the old tune married to new words, Paulus then advanced the whole with his innovative harmonies.

**Eric Whitacre** is one of the most-performed composers of his generation. Born in 1970, he studied composition at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the Juilliard School with notable composers including John Corigliano (composer of *Fern Hill*) and David Diamond. His choral and band works have rapidly become accepted in the repertoire due to their strong appeal to audiences and players alike. In addition to composing, Whitacre tours the world as a conductor of his own works. **Sleep** was originally a setting of Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening." The Frost estate maintains very strict controls on musical settings of Robert's work. Some reports say that Frost himself banned any musical setting of his work after being disgusted with Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*. So Whitacre has been denied permission to use the Frost text in any performance or recording. This is where Charles Silvestri's poem came from – it is a perfect musical match to "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening."

**Morten Lauridsen** is considered to be the most frequently performed American choral composer. His compositions appear on more than 200 CDs, and four of his choral works, including "**Sure on This Shining Night**," have become the all-time best selling choral pieces distributed by Theodore Presser, a company that has been in business since 1783. Lauridsen spends his summers in a cabin on a remote island off the coast of Washington state, drawing inspiration from the beauty and serenity of nature.

"I first encountered Dylan Thomas's work in 1959, my last undergraduate year at Columbia College. It was a revelation. Both the sound and structures of Thomas's words were astonishingly musical. Not by accident, either: "What the words meant was of secondary importance; what matters was the sound of them...these words were as the notes of bells, the sounds of musical instruments," he wrote in his Poetic Manifesto of 1951. I was irresistibly drawn to translate his music into mine. One poem captivated me: **Fern Hill**, about the poet's "young and easy" summers at his family's farm of the same name. I wanted to write this work as a gift for my high-school music teacher, Mrs. Bella Tillis, who first encouraged my musical ambitions. She introduced *Fern Hill* with piano accompanying her (and, once, my) school choir. *Fern Hill* is a blithe poem, yet touched by darkness; time finally holds the poet "green and dying," but the poem itself, formally

just an ABA song extended into a wide arch, sings joyously of youth and its keen perceptions. I set it for mezzo-soprano solo, chorus, and orchestra, aiming to match the forthright lyricism of the text. (The direction "with simplicity" is everywhere in the printed score.)" — **John Corigliano**

At age seven, **Ola Gjeilo** (pronounce Yay-lo) began studying jazz, classical piano, and composition. His degrees came from the Royal College of Music in London and the Julliard School. He loves writing for chorus and choruses around the world have embraced his music. Gjeilo projects an esthetic of compassionate understanding. Life itself challenges us, unfairly at times; we must not close ourselves in but reach out for goodness to survive. Gjeilo wants us to feel that challenge in our very soul. **Across the Vast, Eternal Sky** came about from a 2010 commission from Gjeilo to poet Charles Silvestri (writer of the poem "Sleep.") The last line of their previous collaboration, *Tundra*, the title, Silvestri writes, "was the starting point of a discussion which eventually came around to the idea of a phoenix, a twist on the theme of rebirth [...]. The legend of the firebird offered creative opportunities to explore the themes of spiritual growth and renewal." Gjeilo wrote the piece for the Salt Lake Vocal Artists who premiered it July 26, 2011.

## Biographies

**Benjamin Blozan** maintains an active schedule as a collaborative pianist, vocal coach, and educator. He has worked with many opera companies including Opera North, Nashville Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Lake George Opera, and Delaware Valley Opera Company. He is currently the pianist for Greensboro Opera, a faculty member at High Point University, and an entrepreneur. His recording studio, BCB Recording produces promotional audio for classical singers and instrumentalists.

Blozan holds the Doctorate of Musical Arts in Accompanying and Chamber Music from UNC-G as well as a Master of Music in Accompanying and Opera Coaching from Temple University. In addition to his degree work, he has attended workshops at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria; Académie Internationale d'Été de Nice; and the Académie de Villecroze.

**Jonathan Emmons** holds the Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance from Bridgewater College and the Master of Music in Choral Conducting from University of Michigan. He is organist and director of music at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensboro.

**Clara O'Brien** is an international artist holding degrees from the *Eastman School of Music* (M.M., Performance Certificate) and the *Dana School of Music* (B.M., Summa cum laude) and completed her stage training at the *Curtis Institute of Music*. Her apprenticeship programs included *Lyric Opera Center for American Artists* and the *Aspen Music Festival*. She was a *Fulbright Scholar* and was awarded a fellowship to the *Münchener Singschul'*. She has also taught at the American Institute for Musical Studies in Graz, Austria and gives master classes throughout the United States. Ms. O'Brien is currently Associate Professor of Voice at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.





**University of South Carolina  
School of Music**

presents

**Jason Allen Wright**

in

**DMA Choral Conducting Recital**

Solo Recital No. 1

Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016; 2pm  
Incarnation Lutheran Church  
Columbia, South Carolina

## *program*

Out of the deep

Thomas Morley  
(1557-1603)

Aaron Cates, counter-tenor

*Die Sieben Worte Jesu am Kreuz* SWV 478  
(Seven Last Words from the Cross)

Heinrich Schutz  
(1585-1672)

Melanie Buckner, Aaron Cates, Aubrey Nelson, Jacob Rathman, evangelists  
Jim Watson, Jesus

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* BWV 140  
(Wake ye maids! Hark, strikes the hour)

Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)

Lauren Clark, soprano; Aaron Cates, tenor; and Jacob Rathman, bass

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting

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## *Personnel*

Melanie Buckner, *soprano*  
Lauren Clark, *soprano*  
Stephanie Langford, *soprano*  
Lindsey Cope, *alto*  
Natalie Gilbert, *alto*  
Aubrey Nelson, *alto*  
Aaron Cates, *tenor*  
Almond Ponge, *tenor*  
Jim Watson, *tenor*  
Jack Li, *bass*  
Tom Mottrone, *bass*  
Jacob Rathman, *bass*  
Robert Spearman, *bass*

William Moon, *oboe I*  
Aaron Martin, *oboe II*  
Colby Hathaway, *English horn*  
Tyler Elling, *trumpet*  
Hannah Schendel, *violin I*  
Austen Speare, *violin II*  
Preston Barbare, *viola*  
Caroline Stevens, *cello*  
Anthony Farmer, *bass*  
William Douglas, *organ*

## *Program Notes*

*Out of the deep*, by Thomas Morley (1557-1602), is one of the most well-known and best loved verse anthem. The composer sets the whole text of Psalm 130 from the Book of Common Prayer. Featuring the plaintive tones of the countertenor voice, alternates verses of the psalm are sung by soloist and then choir. Only at the end of verse three, "O Lord, who may abide it? 'Does the choir sings words already sung by the soloist. In this work Morley demonstrates his mastery of the word painting exemplified in the opening vocal phrase "out of the deep have I called to thee, O Lord," which starts on the lowest note possible for a countertenor to sing.

**Schütz's *Die Sieben Worte***, one of three passion settings of Heinrich Schütz, written in 1666, is a setting of the biblical texts of Jesus' words from the cross taken from John 19:25-30; Luke 23:33, 38-42, 45; and Matthew 27:46. Despite being an earlier composition (prior to 1658), it is closer in style to the later Baroque oratorio. The choral introduction and conclusion set texts of protestant hymns, and are respectively followed and preceded by instrumental interludes; the voice of Jesus is accompanied by two instruments, anticipating Bach's technique in the *St. Matthew Passion*; and the part of the Evangelist is assigned to more than one solo voice, with some lines even sung by a vocal quartet.

***Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*** During Bach's time, "Wachet" was the principal hymn for the twenty-seventh Sunday after Trinity, a rare occurrence in the church calendar. This service, for which Bach wrote cantata 140, fell on November 25, 1731. The lectionary for this Sunday was from Matthew 25. Because of its strong eschatological slant, Bach chose not to set it musically. Rather, Bach chose to use passages from the Song of Songs, another appointed reading for that Sunday. In the cantata the text from Song of Songs is treated as love duets between Christ and Soul, presented by the duet between soprano and bass. Before each duet, we get a secco recitative first by the tenor and then from the bass. The main chorale melody is set at the watchman's song between the two duets, sung by the tenors of the choir. The cantata opens and closes with a choral setting of the hymn, the first a polyphonic setting with an extensive *alleluia* section and the last in choral texture. Philip Nicolai's hymn "Wachet auf! serves as the cantus firmus for the cantata.

## Text

### Out of the deep

Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared. I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for him: in his word is my trust. My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch. O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel: from all his sins.

### Die Sieben Worte Jesu am Kreuz

#### Word One

**Vater, vergieb ihnen; den sie wissen nicht, was sie tun!**

*Father, forgive, them; for they know not what they do!*

#### Word Two

**Weib, siehe, das ist dein Sohn!**

*Woman, behold, this is your son!*

#### Word Three

**Wahrlich ich sage dir: Heute wirst du mit mir im Paradies sein.**

*Truly I say to you: today you will be with me in Paradise.*

#### Word Four

**Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?**

*Eli, Eli, lama asabthani?*

#### Word Five

**Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?**

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?*

#### Word Six

**Mich dürstet!**

*I thirst!*

#### Word Seven

**Es ist vollbracht!**

*It is finished!*

### Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

#### 1. Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

*Wake up, the voice calls us*

**Der Wächter sehr hoch auf der Zinne,**  
*of the watchmen high up on the battlements,*

**Wach auf, du Stadt Jerusalem!**

*wake up, you city of Jerusalem!*

**Mitternacht heißt diese Stunde;**

*This hour is called midnight;*

**Sie rufen uns mit hellem Munde:**

*they call us with a clear voice:*

**Wo seid ihr klugen Jungfrauen?**

*where are you, wise virgins ?*

**Wohl auf, der Bräutigam kömmt;**

*Get up, the bridegroom comes;*

**Steht auf, die Lampen nehmt! Alleluja!**

*Stand up, take your lamps! Hallelujah!*

**Macht euch bereit**

*Make yourselves ready*

**Zu der Hochzeit,**

*for the wedding,*

**Ihr müsset ihm entgegen gehn!**

*you must go to meet him!*

#### 2. Er kommt, er kommt,

*He comes, he comes,*

**Der Bräutigam kommt!**

*the bridegroom comes!*

**Ihr Töchter Zions, kommt heraus,**

*You daughters of Zion, come out,*

**Sein Ausgang eilet aus der Höhe**

*he hastens his departure from on high*

**In euer Mutter Haus.**

*to your mother's house.*

**Der Bräutigam kommt, der einem Rehe**

*The bridegroom comes, who like a roe deer*

**Und jungen Hirsche gleich**

*and a young stag*

**Auf denen Hügeln springt**

*leaps on the hills*

**Und euch das Mahl der Hochzeit bringt.**

*and brings to you the wedding feast.*

**Wacht auf, ermuntert euch!**

*Wake up, rouse yourselves*

**Den Bräutigam zu empfangen!**

*to welcome the bridegroom!*

**Dort, sehet, kommt er hergegangen.**

*There, see, he comes this way.*

**3. Soul:**

**Wenn kömmst du, mein Heil?**  
*When are you coming, my salvation?*

**Jesus:**

**Ich komme, dein Teil.**  
*I come, your portion.*

**Soul:**

**Ich warte mit brennendem Öle.**  
*I wait with burning oil.*

**Jesus:**

**Eröffne den Saal**  
*Open the hall*

**Soul:**

**Ich öffne den Saal**  
*I open the hall*  
**Zum himmlischen Mahl**  
*to the heavenly feast.*

**Soul:**

**Komm, Jesu!**  
*Come, Jesus!*

**Jesus:**

**Komm, liebliche Seele!**  
*Come, lovely soul!*

**4. Zion hört die Wächter singen,**  
*Zion hears the watchmen sing,*  
**Das Herz tut ihr vor Freuden springen,**  
*her heart leaps for joy,*  
**Sie wachet und steht eilend auf.**  
*she awakes and gets up in haste.*

**Ihr Freund kommt vom Himmel prächtig,**  
*Her friend comes from heaven in his splendour,*  
**Von Gnaden stark, von Wahrheit mächtig,**  
*strong in mercy, mighty in truth.*

**Ihr Licht wird hell, ihr Stern geht auf.**  
*Her light becomes bright, her star rises.*

**Nun komm, du werthe Kron,**  
*Now come, you worthy crown,*

**Herr Jesu, Gottes Sohn!**  
*Lord Jesus, God's son!*

**Hosianna!**

*Hosanna!*

**Wir folgen all**  
*We all follow*

**Zum Freudensaal**  
*to the hall of joy*  
**Und halten mit das Abendmahl.**  
*and share in the Lord's supper.*

**5. So geh herein zu mir,**  
*So come inside to me*  
**Du mir erwählte Braut!**  
*you bride that I have chosen for myself,*  
**Ich habe mich mit dir**

**Von Ewigkeit vertraut.**

*I have betrothed myself to you from eternity to eternity.*

**Dich will ich auf mein Herz,**  
*It is you that I want to set in my heart,*  
**Auf meinem Arm gleich wie ein Siegel**  
**setzen**

*on my arm like a seal*  
**Und dein betrübtes Aug ergötzen.**  
*and to delight your grieved eyes.*

**Vergiß, o Seele, nun**

*Forget now, o soul,*

**Die Angst, den Schmerz,**  
*the anguish, the sorrow*

**Den du erdulden müssen;**  
*that you had to suffer*

**Auf meiner Linken sollst du ruhn,**  
*On my left hand you should rest*  
**Und meine Rechte soll dich küssen.**  
*and my right hand should kiss you.*

**6. Soul:**

**Mein Freund ist mein,**  
*My friend is mine,*

**Jesus:**

**Und ich bin dein,**  
*and I am yours,*

**Both:**

**Die Liebe soll nichts scheiden.**  
*Nothing shall divide our love.*

**Soul:**

**Ich will mit dir in Himmels Rosen weiden,**  
*I want to graze on heaven's roses with you,*

**Jesus:**

**du sollst mit mir in Himmels Rosen**  
**weiden,**

*You will graze on heaven's roses with me,*

**Both:**

**Da Freude die Fülle, da Wonne wird sein.**  
*There will be fullness of joy, there will be delight.*

**7. Gloria sei dir gesungen**

*May gloria be sung to you*

**Mit Menschen- und englischen Zungen,**  
*with the tongues of men and angels,*

**Mit Harfen und mit Zimbeln schon.**  
*with harps and with cymbals.*

**Von zwölf Perlen sind die Pforten,**  
*The gates are made of twelve pearls,*

**An deiner Stadt sind wir Konsorten**  
*in your city we are companions*

**Der Engel hoch um deinen Thron.**  
*of the angels on high around your throne.*  
**Kein Aug hat je gespürt,**

*No eye has ever perceived,*

**Kein Ohr hat je gehört**

*no ear has ever heard*

**Solche Freude.**

*such joy.*

**Des sind wir froh,**

*Therefore we are joyful,*

**Io, io!**

*hurray, hurray!*

**Ewig in dulci júbilo.** *for ever in sweet*

*rejoicing*



**University of South Carolina**

**School of Music**

presents

**Jason Allen Wright**

in

**DMA Choral Conducting Recital**

Solo Recital No. 2

Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016; 4pm

Incarnation Lutheran Church

Columbia, South Carolina

## *program*

<i>Adagio</i> for Strings	Samuel Barber (1910-1981)
Star-Spangled Banner <sup>+</sup> Shelley Maddox, soprano	Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
Psalm 121: I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes	Cody Jones (b. 1987)
Nine-Eleven – A Remembrance* Incarnation Ringers	Philip M. Young (b. 1937)
Messe de Requiem, Op. 48 Shelley Maddox, soprano; Cody Jones, baritone	Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Pilgrims' Hymn	Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)

+*Southeastern U.S. premier*

\**World premier*

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting  
Jason A. Wright is a student of Larry Wyatt

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## *Personnel*

### **Instrumentalists**

Austen Speare, *violin I*  
David Pazderski, *violin II*  
Mary Hoyt, *viola*  
Brad Ambromaitis, *viola*  
Jordan Bartow, *cello*  
Cecilia Hoyt, *cello*  
Anthony Farmer, *bass*  
Michelle Smith, *horn*  
Danielle Wood, *horn*  
Tom Padgett, *trumpet*  
R. Monty Bennett, *organ*

### **Incarnation Ringers**

Melanie Buckner  
Mary Crosby  
Janet Hoffmann  
Amy Kehl  
Mary Kehl  
Susan McArver  
Debby Muller  
Maggie Murdock  
Ethan Overcash  
Beth Rodgers  
Leslie Skinner  
Anjay Williamson  
Carrie Wood



## **Chorus Members**

### **Soprano**

Rev. Mary W. Anderson  
Pat Blackwell  
Elizabeth Blevins  
Melinda Crenshaw  
Judy Heise  
Janet Hoffmann  
Amy Kehl  
Mary Walker Kehl  
Shelley Maddox  
Linda Mooney  
Georgia L. Narsavage  
Beth Olson  
Tammi Richardson  
Emma Rocheleau  
Rebecca Shortreed  
Kerry Stubbs  
Sarah Whiteheard

### **Tenor**

Ron Bannister  
Dwight Dockery  
Augie Gil  
James Johnson  
Almond Ponge  
Jonathan Shealy  
David Turner  
Bob Turnmire

### **Alto**

Jessica Barnes  
Gaye Betcher  
Melanie Buckner  
Sally Catoe  
Mary Davis  
Karen L. Hardy  
Susan McArver  
Irelou Moye  
Maggie Parham Murdock  
Susan Neal  
Joanna Paulman  
Ann Ruderman  
Claire Seely  
Nancy Stone-Collum

### **Bass**

George Donavan  
Cody Jones  
Emmett Kirwan  
Brett Klapman  
Jamie LaBorde  
Jack Li  
Ethan Overcash  
Rich Roberson  
Nick Ruden  
Jim Zieche

## **Participating Churches**

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Ebenezer Lutheran, Forest Lake Presbyterian, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Incarnation Lutheran, Living Springs Lutheran, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Main Street UMC, Mt. Tabor Lutheran, Lutheran, St. Andrew's Lutheran, St. John's Episcopal, St. Joseph Catholic Church, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Episcopal, Shandon Presbyterian Church, and USC-School of Music.

## *Program Notes*

### **Adagio for Strings – Samuel Barber**

Barber's *Adagio for Strings* has become a staple in the repertoire, an American anthem of loss and grief. Barber composed the *Adagio* at the age of twenty-six, while traveling Europe with Menotti. It originated in 1936 as the second movement of his first string quartet. In 1938 it was premiered by Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Orchestra in a live radio broadcast. Millions of American listeners immediately identified with the piece. At the time, the United States was striving to recover from the Great Depression, and the threat of Nazi power was forcing Europe into another worldwide conflict. Many considered the premier of the *Adagio* to be the most crucial moment in American orchestral history because it's fitting somberness realistically illustrated the outlook of an economically injured country facing the threat of another gruesome war. Over time, the *Adagio* has been performed during solemn moments in U.S. history as an expression of national grief: it was famously broadcast in 1945 after the announcement of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, and in 2001, was performed in remembrance of the victims of the September 11 attacks. The score for the *Adagio for Strings*, with the melodies in the violins and violas and the countermelodies in the cellos and bass, appears to be beautifully simple counterpoint when it is seen on paper. When performed, however, the elongated melodies and extended suspensions create a great unresolved harmonic tension that leaves the listener in emotional depths. Unlike most composers of his time, Barber rarely participated in the new tonal experiments that were in many ways an audial response to both World Wars. Many consider him a conservative compared to avant-garde atonal composers, but his enduring popularity is the result of his devotion to Western tonality.

### **Star-Spangled Banner – Eric Whitacre**

It is well-known that Francis Scott Key wrote the words for The Star-Spangled Banner upon seeing the United States flag still waving above Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor on the morning of September 14, 1814, following the unsuccessful bombardment by the British throughout the night before. The melody of what will become the National Anthem was composed around 1770 by John Stafford Smith, a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, musical antiquarian, organist and composer. The tune was used by the London Anacreontic Society, a convivial music club dedicated to the pursuits of its namesake, *Anacreon*. *Anacreon* was an ancient Greek writer of love poems and drinking songs. The tune had drifted to America by the 1790s, where it provided the music for numerous political and patriotic lyrics, including an early one by Key himself from 1805 titled *When the Warrior Returns* and a ballad on the death of Davy Crockett in 1836. Key's Star-Spangled Banner was published in the Baltimore American on September 21, 1814, and its words and music were included in many collections of national songs during the following years. By the time of the Civil War, The Star-Spangled Banner had become part of the fabric of American life, but it did not officially replace Hail Columbia as the country's national anthem until 1931.

Eric Whitacre is one of the most-performed composers of his generation. Born in 1970, he studied composition at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the Juilliard School with notable composers including John Corigliano and David Diamond. His choral and band works have rapidly become accepted in the repertoire due to their strong appeal to audiences and players alike. In addition to composing, Whitacre tours the world as a conductor of his own works.

### **Psalm 121: I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes – Cody Jones**

*Psalm 121* was born out of grief. Like many of my compositions, I constructed this short psalm anthem as a prayer of remembrance for a member of his congregation who died suddenly of pancreatic cancer. The introductory motive in the 8' Oboe stop that comes back again in the middle of the piece and then at the end is the call to prayer calling the petitioner to lift up his eyes. The motive itself, going up and then down again, is a musical picture of the hills to which the psalmist lifts his eyes. *Psalm 121* is a reminder that the Lord will preserve those who call on him in grief. – Cody Jones

Cody Jones serves as a church musician at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Columbia, where he has been since 2011. Though a native of South Carolina, Cody grew in North Carolina where he attended Lenoir-Rhyne University. He earned a BA in Sacred Music and studied under Paul D. Weber and Judith Burbank and a master's degree in choral conducting at the University of South Carolina. He is currently pursuing a certification to teach public school music. He is an active composer for his own and other congregations.

### **Nine-Eleven – A Remembrance – Philip M. Young**

"No one aware of the tragedies of Nine-Eleven" can ever be the same. The opportunity to express in musical terms the feelings and memories of that day constitutes a gracious and treasured gift. The resulting handbell composition seeks to honor those whose lives were forever changed or lost instantly, the families who suffered the greatest losses, and the brave souls who responded fearlessly, at the risk of their own lives, to rescue and care for the victims. The music also attempts to express the comfort found in our faith in God and the prayer that we may one day learn to live together in peace.

– Philip M. Young

Philip M. Young is a native of Greenville, South Carolina. His studies in church music, organ, and composition took place at North Greenville University, Furman University, and Florida State University. He has also been awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Campbell University. He is the composer of choral, vocal, organ, and handbell works, with over two hundred of those published. He has frequently collaborated with his brother, poet Richard W. Young, Sr. in solo and choral settings. He served as Minister of Music at The First Baptist Church of Henderson, North Carolina and currently continues his association with that church as Composer in Residence. He has been a frequent

handbell and choral clinician and festival director, and has also been active in the pipe organ industry as the designer of numerous organs.

### **Requiem – Gabriel Fauré**

*Sources debate the year in which Fauré began work on his Requiem, the dates of 1886 or early 1887 are equally mentioned. The initial version, contain the movements Introit and Kyrie, Sanctus, Pie Jesu, Agnus Dei, and In Paradisum. This edition was premiered on January 16, 1888, at the Church of La Madeleine in Paris for the funeral of Joseph Lesoufaché. The orchestration included low strings (violas, cellos, and basses), organ, harp, and timpani, with a short solo for violin. Later that spring a concert performance at La Madeleine on May 4, 1888, Fauré added a pair of horns and a pair of trumpets to the original orchestra. A performance five years later at La Madeleine on January 21, 1893, included the addition of two new movements, the Offertorium and Libera me. The Libera me was composed in 1877 as an independent work for baritone and organ. The final version of the Requiem, was rescored for full orchestra and premiered at the Trocadéro in Paris on July 12, 1900, as part of the Exposition Universelle (World's Fair).*

When Faure was asked about his Requiem, he said “My Requiem was composed for nothing . . . for fun, if I may be permitted to say so.” He disliked the sacred music sanctioned for church use and felt the use of operatic tunes paired with religious texts were inappropriate. Fauré’s father had died on July 25, 1885, and the earliest sketches for movements of the Requiem appeared within the next two years, though Fauré never spoke of having written the work in memory of his father. Faure’s mother died two weeks before the Requiem’s first performance, but there is no evidence that the Requiem was sung to her memory, *despite the fact he was rather bothered by her death.*

Faure’s religious music, reflects his own religious convictions and dislike of the music style demanded by the Catholic Church. He told a friend in 1902, “Perhaps instinctively I sought to break loose from convention. I’ve been accompanying burial services at the organ for so long now! I’ve had it up to here with all that. I wanted to do something else.” Fauré’s departure from the style of the time is evident in the overall mood of the work. Most nineteenth-century settings of the Mass for the Dead are large-scale dramatic works containing theatrical aspects of the liturgical text, highlighting the concept of divine judgment, the day of wrath where sinners will be separated from the righteous and cast into eternal damnation. Fauré’s Requiem emphasizes human feeling, compassion, and tenderness: “People have said my Requiem did not express the terror of death; someone called it a ‘lullaby of death.’ But that’s the way I perceive death: as a happy release, an aspiration to the happiness of beyond rather than a grievous passage.”

Fauré captures human emotion in the Requiem through his choice of texts. Fauré chose to omit the *Dies Irae*, which tells of the Last Judgment that would traditionally follow the opening Introit and Kyrie, preferring the relevant passages of the *Offertorium* and *Libera me*, where the judgmental tone and imagery are much less harsh. At the center of the Requiem, Fauré insert the *Pie Jesu*, the text of which is the final supplication from *the Dies Irae*. Fauré scholar

Carlo Caballero points out that, at La Madeleine and other Parisian churches, it was acceptable to substitute the Pie Jesu for the Benedictus, the movement that traditionally follows the Sanctus. At the end of the Requiem text, Fauré appends two movements, the *Libera me* and the *In Paradisum*, both from the liturgy for burial. The *Libera me* is intended to be sung after the Mass has concluded, during the act of absolution; *In Paradisum* is sung outside the church, in route to the cemetery. By including both movements, Fauré has connected the funeral service and the burial into a single composition.

### **Pilgrims' Hymn – Stephen Paulus**

Pilgrims' Hymn, is written for eight-part mixed choir, and is one of Paulus' most loved and most frequently performed choral works. This short three minute piece comes from the final scene of his one-act opera *The Three Hermits*, which was commissioned and premiered by House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. The words are by Michael Dennis Browne. Pilgrim's Hymn represent a chorus of pilgrims who are travelling with the bishop in the opera; their part almost entirely comes from the Russian Orthodox liturgy. *Pilgrims' Hymn* has been performed by thousands of choirs around the world, including at the funerals of two U.S. presidents, Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan. It is music of comfort and repose, written in a thoroughly tonal idiom, yet subtly inflected with poignant dissonance.

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## *Text*

### **Star-Spangled Banner**

Oh, say! can you see by the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there:  
Oh, say! does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

– Text: Frances Scott Key

### **Psalm 121: I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes**

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

– Text: Psalm 121 - King James translation

## **Requiem**

### **Introit and Kyrie**

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine  
et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

*Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion et tibi reddetur  
votum in Jerusalem.*

A hymn befits thee, O God in Zion, and to thee a vow shall be fulfilled in Jerusalem.

*Exaudi orationem meam ad te omnis caro veniet.*

Hear my prayer, for unto thee all flesh shall come.

*Kyrie eleison,  
Christe eleison.*

Lord have mercy,  
Christ have mercy.

## Offertorium

*O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Glorae libera animas defunctorum de poenis inferni et de profundo lacu;*

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, liberate the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the deep pit;

*O Domine, Jesu Christe, Rex Glorae libera animas defunctorum de ore leonis ne absorbeat eos Tartarus ne cadant in obscurum.*

deliver them from the lion's mouth; let not hell swallow them up, let them not fall into darkness.

*Hostias et preces tibi Domine, laudis offerimus tu suscipe pro animabus illis quarum hodie memoriam facimus.*

Sacrifices and prayers of praise, O Lord, we offer to thee. Receive them, Lord, on behalf of those souls we commemorate this day.

*Fac eas, Domine, de morte transire ad vitam Quam olim Abrahae promisisti et semini eus.*

Grant them O Lord, to pass from death unto life, which once thou promised to Abraham and to his seed.

*Amen.*

Amen

## Sanctus

*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.*

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the highest.

## Pie Jesu

*Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem dona eis requiem sempiternam requiem.*

Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest.

## Agnus Dei

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi dona eis sempiternam requiem.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant them rest everlasting.

*Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine: Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum, quia pius es.*

May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord, in the company of thy saints forever and ever, for thou art merciful.

*Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.*

Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

## Libera Me

*Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa tremenda: Quando coeli movendi sunt et terra: Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem.*

Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal, on that dreadful day: when the heavens and the earth shall quake, when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire.

*Tremens factus sum ego et timeo dum discussio venerit atque ventura ira.*

I am seized by trembling, and I fear until the judgment should come, and I also dread the coming wrath.

*Dies illa, dies irae, calamitatis et miseriae, dies*

O that day, day of wrath, day of calamity and

illa, dies magna et amara valde. Dum veneris  
judicare saeculum per ignem.

Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine et lux  
perpetua luceat eis.

misery, momentous day, and exceedingly  
bitter, when thou shalt come to judge the  
world by fire.

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let  
perpetual light shine upon them.

### **In Paradisum**

*In Paradisum deducant Angeli: in tuo adventu  
suscipiant te Martyres, et perducant te in civitatem  
sanctam Jerusalem.*

May the angels lead you into paradise; May the  
Martyrs welcome you upon your arrival, and  
lead you into the holy city of Jerusalem.

*Chorus Angelorum te suscipiat et cum Lazaro  
quondam pauper aeternam habeas requiem.*

May a choir of angels welcome you, and, with  
poor Lazarus of old, may you have eternal rest.

### **Pilgrims' Hymn**

Even before we call on Your name  
To ask You, O God,  
When we seek for the words to glorify You, You hear our prayer;  
Unceasing love, O unceasing love,  
Surpassing all we know.

Glory to the father,  
and to the Son,  
And to the Holy Spirit.

Even with darkness sealing us in,  
We breathe Your name,  
And through all the days that follow so fast,  
We trust in You;  
Endless Your grace, O endless Your grace,  
Beyond all mortal dream.

Both now and forever,  
And unto ages and ages,  
Amen.

– Text: Michael Dennis Brown





**University of South Carolina**  
**School of Music**

presents

**Jason Allen Wright**

in

**DMA Choral Conducting Recital**

Solo Recital No. 3 (Partial)

Thursday, December 1st, 2016; 7pm  
Spring Valley High School  
Columbia, South Carolina

## *program*

I Hear America Singing!  
*Eastman School of Music Connections*

My Master Hath a Garden

Randall Thompson  
(1899-1984)

### **Combined Ladies**

from Frostiana "Stopping by the Wood on a Snowy Evening" Randall Thompson  
(1899-1984)

### **Combined Gentlemen**

Three Madrigals

Emma Lou Diemer  
(b.1927)

Song of Democracy

Howard Hanson  
(1896-1981)

### **Viking Singers**

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting

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## *Personnel*

### **Beginning Choir**

Allen, Makayla (A)  
Brown, Chaya (A)  
Earhart, Rebecca (A)  
Franklin, Andrea (A)  
Gray, Briana (S)  
Harmon, Avianah (S)  
Hawkins, Aliyah (A)  
Holder, Benjamin (B)  
Jhaj, Damanjot (B)  
Kelly, Devin (B)  
Laulusa, Azariah (S)  
Lemons, Hannah (S)  
Maya-Soperanez, Christi (A)

Nates, Taylor (S)  
Parsley, Madison (S)  
Rhyner, Kayla (S)  
Richardson, Lelia (A)  
Sampson, Leahrae (S)  
Samuel, Serenity (S)  
Sanchez, Matthew (B)  
Sinkler, Damaris (S)  
Soto-Lira, Derlis (B)  
Speight, Mackenzie (A)  
Sullivan, Mary Elizabeth (A)  
Taylor, Lauryn (A)  
White, Amaryah (A)  
Willingham, Serra (S)

### **Viking Chorale**

Amos, Ahja (S1)  
Brice, Jenna (S2)  
Carlisle, Jayla (S2)  
Collier, Rachel (S2)  
Dial, Kaycee (S1)  
Domenech, Raylin (A)  
Estes-Crook, Tiarra (S1)  
Fletcher, Christi (S2)

Frederick, Shelbi (A)  
Jordon, Kei'Yona (A)  
Ludwick, Lauren (S2)  
Milledge, Sameia (A)  
Ovando Castellanos, Melanie (S1)  
Peay, Alexis (A)  
Shelton, Ti'Ana (S1)  
Sirin, Brianna (S1)

### **Viking Singers**

Andrews, Alurea (A)  
Ashford, Deanna (A)  
Bell, Tryston (B)  
Booker, Devin (B)  
Brickle, Adam (B)  
Cunningham, Zachary (B)  
Gary, Maurice (T)  
Gilchrist, Phillip (T)  
Harding, Christina (S)  
Hernandez, Maria (A)

James, Quinton (T)  
Martin, Karolyn (S)  
McGhaney-Reed, Natalia (A)  
Melton, Briana (S)  
O'Mara, Zane (B)  
Port, Alan (T)  
Price, Jayohndra (A)  
Tefft, Charis (S)  
Whitlow, Elizabeth (S)  
Young, Zachary (B)

## ***Program Notes***

### **My Master Hath a Garden - Thompson**

"My Master Hath a Garden" was written in 1927 and is one of Thompson's most popular songs. It is one of four pieces in a collection entitled, "Four Easy Songs." The author of the text is unknown, but provides a musical description of paradise.

Randall Thompson was a well-known educator. In 1931 he was commissioned by the Association of American Colleges to examine musical education in America. His three-year study resulted in an influential report entitled *College Music*, which emphasized the importance of a liberal education rather than just mechanical training in music. He attended Harvard University, became assistant professor of music and choir director at Wellesley College, and received a doctorate in music from the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He went on to teach at the Curtis Institute of Music, at the University of Virginia, and at Harvard University. He is particularly noted for his choral works. He was an honorary member of the Rho Tau chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity at Appalachian State University.

**from Frostiana “Stopping by the Wood on a Snowy Evening” – Thompson**  
Frostiana, subtitled “Seven Country Songs,” was commissioned in 1958 for the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. Thompson selected seven poems of Robert Frost, who had lived in Amherst. These poems included one of Frost’s best known poems, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening. The poetry of the entire work provides a glimpse of rural New England life. Movements 2 and 6 are for men’s chorus, this was Thompson’s solution to a logistical problem – the men and women of the amateur festival chorus rehearsed separately; hence the movements for women’s and men’s choruses. Frostiana was premiered on October 18, 1959 with the composer conducting and Frost in attendance. The pairing of Frost and Thompson was an inspired one. There is a deceptive simplicity in Frost’s poetry, with its straightforward language and rhyming schemes. Frost finds magic and wonder in even the most commonplace occurrences of life. Thompson responded in a similar manner by providing seven crafted movements that perfectly catch the meaning of the poetry. Stopping by Woods has a folktune like melody, matching the strophic nature of the poetry. Thompson makes use of tone painting, especially in the accompaniment, the gently falling of snowflakes in Stopping by Woods, but the effects are subtle so as not to detract from the text. And even though Thompson was a master of polyphonic writing, Frostiana is set in a largely homophonic style, so that the words would not be obscured. Frost was never particularly happy to have his poetry set to music, but at the conclusion of the premiere performance he is reported to have leapt to his feet, applauding and shouting “Sing it again!”

### **Three Madrigals - Diemer**

Emma Lou Diemer is a prolific composer of music for keyboard, orchestra, chorus, and electronic media. She was a Fulbright Scholar and earned a doctorate in composition from the Eastman School of Music. Diemer has set the texts of several well-known poets to music including Walt Whitman, Sara Teasdale, Emily Dickinson, John Donne, and Shakespeare. In each of the Three Madrigals, Diemer underscores the text in a slightly different way. “O Mistress Mine, Where Are You Roaming?” features sprightly harmonies and a rapid, almost manic tempo; “Take, O Take Those Lips Away,” mourns the false promises of a lover by using a dirge-like tempo and heavy harmonies; in “Sigh No More Ladies, Sigh No More!” the faster, upbeat tempo returns and the piece is mostly sung in unison, with ironic harmonic twists and teases in the accompanying piano.

### **Song of Democracy – Hanson**

Hanson's place in music history is linked with that of the Eastman School of Music. In 1924 George Eastman, the inventor of Kodak film and founder of the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, personally picked Hanson to head the University of Rochester's fledgling Eastman School of Music. Eastman knew little about music but was a shrewd judge of talent in others. His judgment in the case of the young Hanson would have profound consequences not only for the Eastman School but also for the whole course of American music and music education. Hanson would hold the post of Director at Eastman until his

retirement forty years later and during that remarkable tenure would elevate the school to a commanding position in the American musical community, the leading force behind the cultivation and propagation of American music.

This 1957 work was commissioned from the National Education Association and the Music Educators National Conference in celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Hanson set two excerpts taken from Walt Whitman's poems "An Old Man's Thoughts of School" and "Thou Mother with thy equal brood." The piece was to be inspiring and easy for school choruses and orchestras to perform. The result is a twelve-minute piece, infused with what Hanson noted as "all of the dramatic impact of which I was capable."

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### ***Text***

#### **My Master Hath a Garden**

My Master hath a garden  
Full-filled with diverse flowers,  
Where thou may'st gather posies gay  
All times and hours.  
Where nought is heard but paradise bird,  
Harp, dulcimer and lute,  
With cymbal and timbrel,  
And the gentle sounding flute.  
O Jesus, Lord, my heal and weal,  
My bliss complete,  
Make thou my heart thy garden plot,  
True, fair and neat,  
That I may hear this music clear,  
Harp, dulcimer and lute,  
With cymbal and timbrel,  
And the gentle sounding flute.

Text: Anonymous

## Stopping by the Wood on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though; He  
will not see me stopping here To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Text: Robert Frost

## Three Madrigals

### **O Mistress mine where are you roaming?**

O stay and hear, your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low.  
Trip no further pretty sweeting.  
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.  
What is love, 'tis not hereafter,  
Present mirth, hath present laughter:  
What's to come, is still unsure.  
In delay there lies no plenty,  
Then come kiss me sweet and twenty:  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Text: William Shakespeare

**Take, oh take those lips away,**  
That so sweetly were forsworn,  
And those eyes: the breake of day,  
Lights that do mislead the Morn;  
But my kisses bring again, bring again,  
Seals of love, but sealed in vain, sealed in vain.

Text: William Shakespeare

**Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more.**

Men were deceivers ever,  
One foot in sea, and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never.  
Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more  
Of dumps so dull and heavy.  
The fraud of men was ever so  
Since summer first was leafy.  
Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into hey, nonny, nonny.

Text: William Shakespeare

**Song of Democracy**

An old man's thoughts of school,  
An old man's gathering youthful memories and  
blooms that youth itself cannot.

Now only do I know You,  
O fair auroral skies - O morning dew upon the grass!

And these I see, these sparkling eyes,  
These stores of mystic meaning, these young lives,  
Building, equipping like a fleet of ships, immortal ships,  
Soon to sail out over the measureless seas,  
On the soul's voyage.

Only a lot of boys and girls?  
Only the tiresome spelling, writing, ciphering classes?  
Only a public school?  
Ah more, infinitely more.

And you America,  
Cast you the real reckoning for your present?  
The lights and shadows of your future, good or evil?  
To girlhood, boyhood look, the teacher and the school.  
Sail, Sail thy best, ship of Democracy,  
Of value is thy freight, 'tis not the present only,  
The Past is also stored in thee.  
Thou holdest not the venture of thyself alone,  
not of thy Western continent alone.  
Earth's resume entire floats on thy keel, O ship,

is steadied by thy spars,  
 With thee Time voyages in trust, the antecedent  
 nations sink or swim with thee.  
 With all their ancient struggles, martyrs, heroes,  
 epics, wars, thou bear'st the other continents,  
 Theirs, theirs as much as thine, the destination port triumphant;  
 Steer then with good strong hand and wary eye  
 O helmsman, thou carriest great companions,  
 Venerable priestly Asia sails this day with thee,  
 And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.  
 And royal feudal Europe sails with thee.

Text: Walt Whitman

### *About the Accompanist*

American pianist **Scott Watkins** is a graduate of The University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music with a degree in piano performance where he held the Van Cliburn Scholarship and studied with Bela Siki. He was also a student of the late Canadian pianist Raymond Dudley at The University of South Carolina where he earned the Master of Music degree. He holds a Doctor of Music degree in piano performance from The Florida State University where he studied with the late Edward Kilenyi. He won the prestigious Artistic Ambassador Award from The U. S. Department of State in 1985, and the Patricia D'Angelus Award at the Memphis Beethoven International Piano Competition in 1999. Since those early days his career has taken him to many of the world's concert stages, and he has enjoyed many collaborations with some of the finest orchestras and noted soloists, including soprano Elizabeth Futral, tenor Stanford Olsen, and violinists Eugene Fodor and Hillary Hahn. He has worked with conductors Fabio Mechetti, Andrew Lloyd Jones, Heping Liu, Michael Krajewski, Christopher Confessore, Christopher Wilkins, and Daniel Dominick among many others.

As a collaborative artist Watkins has performed with soprano Elizabeth Futral, tenor Stanford Olsen, Violinists Eugene Fodor and Hillary Hahn, cellist Alexei Romanenko, flutist Les Roettges. He frequently collaborates with his university colleagues and is a member of the Faculty Trio with violinist Marguerite Richardson and cellist Shannon Lockwood.

His latest recording, *American Piano Sonatas*, has garnered high praise from critics. Scott Cantrell wrote in *The Dallas Morning News* that "Watkins plays authoritatively and expressively," and *Fanfare Magazine's* Peter Burwasser said that "Watkins plays splendidly bringing a fine tonal balance and elegance" to the three sonatas by Howard Hanson, Carlisle Floyd, and William Schirmer.

In October of 2015, Watkins made his fourth solo recital appearance at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. In a review of this performance, Rorianne Schrade writing for *New York Concert Review* praised Watkins for his "laser-like focus" in the Bartok Sonata, noting that it "was bold and bracing in its relentless



rhythms without ever devolving into the earsplitting harshness." She was equally praiseful of the Hanson Sonata, saying he played "with excellent attention to detail and respect for the score and with the fidelity of a music historian." Debussy's Preludes, Book II, she said "were a good match for Mr. Watkins' gifts. Despite the tendency of many pianists to use the excuse of "impressionism" to run wild and drown some of these twelve pieces in pedal, we know that Debussy was against such abuse, and Mr. Watkins gets it right. He plays with the requisite clarity, but with great sweeps and washes of sound when required. These were excellent performances. There was delicacy in Bruyères and a haunting quality in Feuilles mortes. Mr. Watkins is an undemonstrative player, but the music spoke for itself. A "straight man" approach in fact enhanced the fun of "Général Lavine" – eccentric and Hommage à S. Pickwick Esq., P. P. M. P. C., as one might expect. Les tierces alternées (No. 11) was also a highlight. Mr. Watkins was extremely impressive in his handling of its exposed technical challenges. While it is not this listener's favorite Prélude, it took a prize for sheer digital prowess. Feux d'artifice (No. 12) was a brilliant close, played with vivid imagination and fire. All in all, it was a highly praiseworthy concert – a fulfilling musical evening."

In November, 2015, Dr. Watkins was a featured artist at the College Music Society's National Conference in Indianapolis, and at the Society of Composers, Inc., National Conference at the University of Florida where he performed JU colleague Dr. Jianjun He's virtuoso solo piano work, "Song of the Himalayas."

Watkins is currently Associate Professor of Music at Jacksonville University where he is the coordinator of keyboard studies, and since 2011, has held the position of Visiting Foreign Scholar at Beifang University's Conservatory of Music and Dance in Yin Chuan, China, where he teaches and lectures during the Spring.



**University of South Carolina**

**School of Music**

presents

**Jason Allen Wright**

in

**DMA Choral Conducting Recital**

Solo Recital No. 3 (Partial)

Thursday, March 9, 2017; 7pm

Christ Church Cathedral

Indianapolis, Indiana

## *program*

Missa Brevis

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina  
(c. 1525-1594)

from *Vesperae solennes de confessore* (K.339)  
Laudate Dominum

Wolfgang A. Mozart  
(1756-1791)

Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in C

Charles Villiers Stanford  
(1852-1924)

Judge Eternal

Gerre Hancock  
(1934-2012)

Witness

Jack Halloran  
(1916-1997)

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting

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## *Personnel*

### **Treble**

Ellie Culbertson  
Carys Diaz  
Katie Gunn  
Audrey McDuffee  
Ewan McDuffee  
Ellie Thompson  
Nolan Thompson  
Annie Virgin-Meek

### **Alto**

George Benn  
Steven Rickards  
Dean Strouse  
Michael Walker

### **Tenor**

Dan Ahlgren  
Zach Cardwell  
Jeffrey Collier  
Chad DeMaris  
Paul Han

### **Bass**

TJ Bourne  
Jonathan Bryan  
Rafael Porto  
Sean Manterfield  
Bruno Sandes

A special thanks to Christ Church Cathedral, Dr. Michael Boney, *Canon for Music*  
and Mr. Matthew Middleton, *Associate Director of Music*, for the opportunity to  
work with the Cathedral Choir.

## *Program Notes*

### **Missa Brevis – Palestrina**

Palestrina's four-voice Missa Brevis was written in 1558 and published in 1570, in the Third Book of Masses. The title indicates a short mass; however, the work is rather lengthy, lasting around twenty-eight minutes. Palestrina's style characteristics include the use of modal and diatonic imitative polyphony, with controlled use of dissonance. The melodic lines combine to make triads and chords of the sixth. The melodies stepwise motion show an influence of Gregorian chant. In the Sanctus, Palestrina quotes the chant melody from the Gregorian Mass XV. The text is expressed through use of varying tempi. Palestrina avoids text repetition to decrease the length of the mass. The mass ends with two Agnus Dei settings.

### **Laudate Dominum – Mozart**

The *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*, composed on September 24th, the feast day of St. Rupert, the patron saint of Salzburg, was the last work composed by Mozart for Archbishop Colloredo. The archbishop insisted that the evening service of Vespers not exceed 45 minutes. The service consists of five Psalms and the Magnificat canticle. The Laudate Dominum, a hymn of praise, begins with a lyric, soaring, and expressive solo with the chorus entering on the Gloria patri.

### **Magnificat and Nunc dimittis – Stanford**

Stanford was one of many distinguished Romantic composers of the English church music scene. His setting of the Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in C is his most known. This soaring, chorale-like, setting rises and falls in intensity and climaxes with the Gloria patri. The Nunc dimittis begins with a quiet solitude and quickly accelerates to recap the Gloria patri heard at the end of the Magnificat.

### **Judge Eternal – Hancock**

Hancock received this commission from the Houston Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for their National Convention in 1988. The work was based on the hymn text "Judge Eternal, Throned in Splendor." It was performed by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, Stephen Cleobury, director of music.

### **Witness – arr., Halloran**

Arranger Jack Halloran was born in Rock Rapids, Iowa, and earned degrees in music from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and Northwestern University in Evanston. He sang with a male quartet called the Cadets on several Chicago-based radio shows, including The Breakfast Club with Don McNeill. Relocating to Hollywood, Halloran became a choral director for films, records, and television, working with such entertainers as Roy Rogers, Pat Boone, Ray Charles, and Frank Sinatra. "Witness" is a traditional Spiritual, arranged by Halloran. It is a complex and showy arrangement that highlights various voice parts and moves from both swung and straight styles.

## *Text*

**Kyrie** eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Gloria** in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax  
hominibus bonæ voluntatis.

Glory be to God in the highest.  
And in earth peace  
to men of good will.

Laudamus te; benedicimus te;  
adoramus te; glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We praise Thee; we bless Thee;  
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee  
for Thy great glory.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris.

O Lord God, Heavenly King,  
God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only  
begotten Son.  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,  
O miserere nobis.

Thou that takest away the sins of  
the world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of  
the world, receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of  
the Father,  
have mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris.

For thou only art holy,  
thou only art the Lord,  
thou only art the most high, Jesus  
Christ. Together with the Holy  
Ghost  
in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Amen.

**Credo** in unum Deum;  
Patrem omnipotentem,  
factorem coeli et terræ,  
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

I believe in one God;  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and  
invisible.

Credo in unum Dominum Jesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum,  
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia sæcula.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only begotten Son of God,  
begotten of the Father before all

Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,  
Deum verum de Deo vero,  
Genitum non factum,  
consubstantialem Patri:  
per quem omnia facta sunt.  
Qui propter nos homines,  
et propter nostram salutem  
descendit de coelis.  
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto  
ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est.

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis  
sub Pontio Pilato,  
passus et sepultus est.  
Et resurrexit tertia die  
secundum Scripturas.  
Et ascendit in coelum:  
sedet ad dexteram Patris.  
Et iterum venturus est cum gloria,  
iudicare vivos et mortuos:  
cujus regni non erit finis.

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum,  
Dominum, et vivificantem:  
qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.  
Qui cum Patre et Filio simul  
adoratur et conglorificatur:  
qui locutus est per Prophetas.

Credo in unam sanctam  
catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

Confiteor unum baptisma,  
in remissionem peccatorum.

Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum  
et vitam venturi sæculi.

Amen.

worlds;  
God of God, light of light,  
true God of true God,  
begotten not made;  
being of one substance with the  
Father, by Whom all things were  
made. Who for us men  
and for our salvation  
descended from heaven;  
and was incarnate by the Holy  
Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was  
made man.

He was crucified also for us,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
and was buried.  
And on the third day He rose again  
according to the Scriptures:  
and ascended into heaven.  
He sitteth at the right hand of the  
Father;  
and He shall come again with glory  
to judge the living and the dead;  
and His kingdom shall have no  
end.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
Who proceedeth from the Father  
and the Son,  
Who with the Father and the Son  
together  
is worshipped and glorified;  
as it was told by the Prophets.

And I believe in one holy  
catholic and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism  
for the remission of sins.

And I await the resurrection of the  
dead and the life of the world to  
come.

Amen.

**Sanctus**, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus  
Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of  
Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of  
Thy glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.

Blessed is He that cometh  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

**Agnus Dei**,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei.  
Dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,  
Who takest away the sins of the  
world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God.  
Grant us peace.

***Laudate Dominum** omnes gentes  
Laudate eum, omnes populi  
Quoniam confirmata est  
Super nos misericordia eius,  
Et veritas Domini manet in aeternum.*

Praise the Lord, all nations;  
Praise Him, all people.  
For He has bestowed  
His mercy upon us,  
And the truth of the Lord endures  
forever.

*Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper.  
Et in saecula saeculorum.  
Amen.*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and  
to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and  
forever,  
and for generations of generations.  
Amen.

### **Magnificat**

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

### **Nunc dimittis**

Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: A Light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory be to the

Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

### **Judge Eternal**

Judge Eternal, throned in splendor, Lord of lords and King of kings, with your living fire of judgment purge this land of bitter things; solace all its wide dominion with the healing of your wings. Still the weary folk are pining for the hour that brings release, and the city's crowded clangor cries aloud for sin to cease, and the homesteads and the woodlands plead in silence for their peace. Crown, O God, your own endeavor; cleave our darkness with your sword; feed the faithless and the hungry with the richness of your word; cleanse the body of this nation through the glory of the Lord.

### **Witness**

Who'll be a witness for my Lord? Oh I'll be a witness for my Lord. There was a man of the Pharisees, His name was Nicodemus and he didn't believe. The same came to Christ by night, wanted to be taught out of human sight. Nicodemus was a man who desired to know How a man can be born when he is old. Christ told Nicodemus as a friend: "Man you must be born again." He said: "Marvel not, man, if you want to be wise, Repent, believe, and be baptized." Then you'll be a witness for my Lord; soul is a witness for my Lord. You read about Samson, from his birth, He was the strongest man that ever lived on earth. Way back yonder in ancient times he killed ten thousand of the Phillistines. Then old Samson went a wand'rin' about. Samson's strength was never found out. 'Till his wife sat upon his knee. She said: "Tell me where your strength lies, if you please!" Samson's wife, she talk so fair Samson said: "Cut off a my hair! Shave my head just as clean as your hand, And my strength will come like a natural man. "Samson was a witness for my Lord; soul is a witness for my Lord. There's another witness for my Lord! My soul is a witness for my Lord.





**University of South Carolina  
School of Music**

presents

**Jason Allen Wright**

in

**DMA Choral Conducting Lecture-Recital**

Saturday, January 15th, 2017; 3pm  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church – 2430 NW K Street  
Washington, District of Columbia

## *Program*

### The Choral Music of McNeil Robinson, II

Lecture on McNeil Robinson and His Choral Music

Jubilate Deo

McNeil Robinson  
(1943-2015)

Had I But Pinions

Natalie Conte, soprano

McNeil Robinson

Missa Brevis (1996)

McNeil Robinson

I. Kyrie

II. Gloria

III. Sanctus

IV. Angus Dei

Natalie Conte, soprano

Psalm 150

McNeil Robinson

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts  
in Choral Conducting

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## *Personnel*

### **Soprano**

Katlyn Aungust  
Lizzie Discenza  
Annie Simon

### **Alto**

Barbara Hollishead  
Pamela Terry  
Madelyn Wanner

### **Tenor**

Jeff Kempskie  
Kyle Tomlin

### **Bass**

Josh Brown  
Collin Power  
John Stowe

## TEXT

### Jubilate Deo

Jubilate Deo universa terra: psalmum dicite nomine ejus: Venite et audite, et narrabo vobis, omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit Dominus animae meae. Alleluia.

*Be joyful in God, all you lands; sing the glory of his Name; sing the glory of his praise. Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me. Alleluia.*

### But I Had Pinions

Had I but pinions of a dove to fly away and be at rest: Far, far away would be my flight; in the wilderness would I settle. To my haven would I hasten out of the sweeping wind and tempest. I'll fly away and be at rest.

*(Psalm 55)*

### Missa Brevis

**Kyrie** eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Gloria** in excelsis Deo.  
Et in terra pax  
hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Glory be to God in the highest.  
And in earth peace  
to men of good will.

Laudamus te; benedicimus te;  
adoramus te; glorificamus te.  
Gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam.

We praise Thee; we bless Thee;  
we worship Thee; we glorify Thee.  
We give thanks to Thee  
for Thy great glory.

Domine Deus, Rex coelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili unigenite Jesu Christe.  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris.

O Lord God, Heavenly King,  
God the Father Almighty.  
O Lord Jesus Christ, the only  
begotten Son.  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father.

Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dextram Patris,  
O miserere nobis.

Thou that takest away the sins of the  
world, have mercy upon us.  
Thou that takest away the sins of the  
world, receive our prayer.  
Thou that sittest at the right hand of  
the Father,  
have mercy upon us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe.  
Cum Sancto Spiritu  
in gloria Dei Patris.

Amen.

For thou only art holy,  
thou only art the Lord,  
thou only art the most high, Jesus  
Christ. Together with the Holy Ghost  
in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

**Sanctus**, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus  
Sabaoth.  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.  
Osanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of  
Hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of Thy  
glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Osanna in excelsis.

Blessed is He that cometh  
in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

**Agnus Dei**,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis.  
Agnus Dei.  
Dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,  
Who takest away the sins of the  
world,  
have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God.  
Grant us peace.

## Psalm 150

Alleluia. Praise God in his holy temple, praise him in the firmament of his power.  
Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him for his excellent greatness.  
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with lute and harp.  
Praise him with timbrel and dance, praise him with strings and pipe.  
Praise him with well tuned cymbals, praise him with clashes of cymbals,  
let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

## *About the Organist*

Hailed as “a superb organist” (The Washington Examiner), **John Bradford Bohl** is a multi-faceted musician, working as conductor, organist, singer, accompanist and coach. A native of the Flint, Michigan, Mr. Bohl is the Interim Director of Music at St. Paul’s, K Street, where he previously served as Assistant Director of Music since 2007, and is responsible for the direction and accompanying of the semi-professional Parish Choir, the Choir of Boys & Girls and the Youth Choir.

As organist, Mr. Bohl has performed all over the United States, both as a soloist and accompanist. He can be heard as accompanist on the 2010 recording *We Sing of God*, by the choirs of St. Paul’s, K Street; and as soloist and accompanist with The Washington Chorus and the Washington Symphonic Brass on the 2009 CD *Christmas in Washington*. He can also be heard as countertenor soloist on the 2010 Grammy-nominated recording of Handel’s *Israel in Egypt* with the choir of Trinity Wall Street, New York City.

Acclaimed as a “sterling countertenor” with “a voice of clarity and dexterity”, Mr. Bohl made his Kennedy Center debut in a performance of *The Lark* by Leonard Bernstein with The Washington Chorus in November 2012. He performs regularly as both soloist and chorister with The Washington Bach Consort, the choirs of The Washington National Cathedral, Cathedra, the resident chamber ensemble at the Washington National Cathedral, and is a founding member of the Austin, Texas based Ensemble VIII.

Mr. Bohl began piano studies at age six, and organ studies at age nine. He was a organ student of Dr. Marilyn Keiser and voice student in the Early Music Department of Dr. Paul Elliott at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Mr. Bohl previously served as the Chorus Master of The Washington Chorus (2011-2013) and was Assistant Organist/ Choirmaster at Old St. Paul’s Church (Episcopal) in Baltimore, MD (2005-2007)

## APPENDIX G – BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR

**Jason A. Wright** is a musician of great energy, drive, character and personality. He is equally at home in academia, the church, and in the community, where he strives for excellence in musical performance and teaching.

As an **ACADEMIC**, Wright has taught at the collegiate level since 2009. Most recently he served as a graduate teaching assistant and instructor of music theory and aural skills at the University of South Carolina. From 2009 – 2015, he was on faculty at Guilford Tech in the department of creative and performing arts, as director of choral and vocal performance studies, where he also taught courses in music theory. Prior to his collegiate appointments, he taught at Canterbury Episcopal School (K-8) in Greensboro, North Carolina. At Canterbury, he was director of campus music and chair of the fine arts department. He worked collaboratively with music, art, drama, and dance faculty. He was instrumental in the formation of the after-school arts academy, overseeing two endowments for music and art, designing and overseeing the installation of a new chapel organ, and in the building of the Stafford Fine Arts Center.

As a **CONDUCTOR**, Wright is known for his creative and challenging programming. In 2011, he founded The Kerner Chorale, “Kernersville’s Choral Society,” a mixed-voice ensemble of amateur singers. The ensemble was one of six choral organizations in the Triad area of North Carolina. In the fall of 2014, a twelve-voice professional ensemble, The Kerner Singers, was added under The Kerner Chorale’s umbrella. While a doctorate student at USC, he organized and conducted concerts with area Lutheran Churches in Columbia, referred to as The Lutheran Chorale of Columbia. In the fall of 2016, he started The Compline Schola, an ensemble of eight singers, whose primary responsibility was to sing and pray the monastic Office of Compline once per month. The choir is mirrored after the famed Pittsburg Compline Choir.

In addition to conducting his own ensembles, Wright has served as an adjudicator for choral festivals, conducted All County Choruses, and has been invited to work with choirs for both public and private schools in NC, SC, and VA. During his graduate work, he rehearsed and performed with university ensembles. He has conducted highly regarded choirs in the US, including the Parish Choir of St. Paul’s Parish K-Street in Washington, DC and The Choir of Trebles and Men at Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, IN.

As an **ORGANIST** and **CHURCH MUSICIAN**, Wright has served Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and United Methodist Churches. He began playing the organ for his home parish at the age of fifteen and by the time he graduated high school had served two congregations as interim organist. Wright held his first church job as organist/choirmaster at age of nineteen. Music programs under his leadership have

grown both in membership and musicality. As a recitalist, he has performed in such venues as Peachtree Road UMC, Atlanta, Georgia; The Cathedral Church of St. Philip, Atlanta, Georgia; Boise Music Week, Boise, Idaho; The Cathedral Church of St. Mark, Salt Lake City, Utah; and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City. In addition, he has played recitals for AGO Chapters and churches across the southeastern US. His organ teachers include Mary Lou Young, Robert Parkins, Colin Andrews, and Janette Fishell.

As a **SINGER**, Wright has extensively studied the voice, vocal pedagogy, and pedagogy of phonetics. He grew up singing in the North Carolina Boys' Choir. Wright has traveled abroad singing with American choirs at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford; St. George's Chapel, Windsor; Canterbury Cathedral, Kent; and Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester. His voice teachers include James Bumgardner, Levone-Tobin Scott, and Clara O'Brien; vocal pedagogy with Robert Wells and phonetics with Carla LeFevre.

As a **COMPOSER** and **WRITER**, Wright has written both hymn texts and articles for journals in the field. His hymn, "Lord We Call to Thee from Darkness," set to the tune Beach Spring, is published in the Hymnal of First Baptist Church, Henderson, NC. He has numerous articles published in *The Organist's Companion* on organ composers, organ construction and design, and liturgy. *The Organist's Companion* is published by Wayne Leupold Editions, an international publishing house located in Colfax, North Carolina, a suburb of Greensboro. His research interests are in historical choral performance practices and in how conducting gesture and handedness effect choral performance quality. His master's thesis is titled "Fred Waring and Robert Shaw: Their Philosophies and Techniques." His doctorate dissertation is on "McNeil Robinson as Choral Musician: A Survey of His Choral Works for the Christian and Jewish Traditions."

Wright is a **MEMBER** of the American Choral Directors Association, American Guild of Organist, Anglican Association of Musicians, College Music Society, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing. He has served on local boards of the American Guild of Organist and the American Choral Director's Association.

Wright **HOLDS** the DMA in conducting from the University of South Carolina, the MM in choral conducting with a cognate in vocal pedagogy from the University of North Carolina Greensboro, and the BM in sacred music and organ performance from East Carolina University. In addition to his academic degrees, he has earned a post-bachelorette certificate in music education from the University of North Carolina Greensboro and a graduate certificate in higher education student affairs administration from Indiana University – Bloomington.

Outside of music he enjoys the company of his family and two Miniature Schnauzers, Windsor and Adeline, collecting nautical oil paintings, trips to the beach, and traveling both domestically and internationally.